

Assurance Argument

Maricopa Community Colleges-Rio Salado Community College - AZ

Review date: 2/28/2022

1 - Mission

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A - Core Component 1.A

The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Argument

1.

Rio Salado College (RSC) is one of 10 institutions in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD), the [second-largest community college district](#) in the nation. A seven-member elected Governing Board oversees all 10 colleges; however, each MCCCD institution is individually-accredited and has a unique mission. [RSC's mission documents](#) align with the [District's mission and governing values](#) while reflecting the College's innovative culture and unique role within the District.

The RSC mission documents are reviewed every two to three years to ensure that they continue to reflect college planning and priorities. A revision in FY2013-14 was followed by a review in FY2015-16 when the prior Strategic Plan (2016-19) was developed. The comprehensive planning and visioning process for the 2020-24 RSC Strategic Plan, including input from students, employees, and community members, will be detailed in Criterion 5.C.3. As part of the process, the then-current mission documents were re-examined. Revisions were proposed to the Executive Team (comprising executive and faculty leadership), who accepted the suggested changes and held a series of retreats in fall 2019 and spring 2020 to draft and define values statements. These recommendations were shared with the entire RSC community at an all-employee meeting in May 2020, and feedback was then collected via a [college-wide survey](#) of faculty and staff which was overwhelmingly positive. The revised vision, mission, and values that emerged from this process are:

VISION

Empower learners everywhere through innovative education

MISSION

We redefine the educational experience by anticipating the needs of our students and future workforce. We support learners where they are and provide high-quality, flexible, and accessible education to empower individual goal attainment, foster partnerships, and strengthen communities.

VALUES

Rio Salado College honors everyone's unique qualities with respect and dignity.

WE VALUE:

- Innovation and Learning
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Integrity and Stewardship
- Sustainable Practices
- Collaboration and Service

The mission documents reflect RSC's ongoing focus on learner empowerment, anticipating students' needs, and the future of the workforce. These revisions were determined not to require Substantive Change consideration by the Higher Learning Commission. The changes were approved as part of the [Consent Agenda](#) (Item 10.2) of the MCCCDC Governing Board meeting on September 22, 2020.

2.

RSC's culture is focused on its [educational purposes](#): college bridge pathways; community-based learning; corporate and government partnerships; early college initiatives; online learning; and university transfer. These purposes are actualized through a mission of redefining the educational experience by anticipating the needs of RSC's students and future workforce, supporting learners where they are, and providing high-quality, flexible, and accessible education to empower individual goal attainment, foster partnerships, and strengthen communities.

The three goals of the RSC 2020-24 Strategic Plan [align directly with the mission](#).

3.

RSC's primary focus since its founding has been its model for high-quality, low-cost, accessible educational opportunities. Historically, this has attracted credential-seeking students as well as non-credential seeking (guest/supplemental) students; those taking courses for personal interest, job skills, or transfer to another college or university, who comprise roughly 75% of the student population in a given academic year. RSC's flexible schedule (40+ Monday start dates a year) and low attendance costs allow students both in Arizona and out-of-state to complete courses when they are unavailable at their home institutions and/or when scheduling conflicts arise. As indicated in the recently-revised mission documents, RSC continues to serve students "where they are" and thus remains consistent with its roots as a nontraditional college while evolving to meet the needs of students in a 21st century context.

4.

Academic Offerings

RSC is a public community college, and in keeping with its role as a public institution, provides affordable access to [academic programs](#) across a wide spectrum, spanning degree or certificate programs targeted for those desiring career advancement or advanced degree attainment; general

education courses; college readiness courses; special-interest courses in both credit and non-credit formats; workforce development certificate programs; adult basic education; English language acquisition; and post-baccalaureate teaching credentials. These offerings align with RSC's mission to meet the needs of its students and future workforce by providing high-quality, flexible, and accessible education, and will be described in detail in Criterion 3.A.

Student Support Services

The College provides a comprehensive slate of student support services that align with its mission commitment to "...support learners where they are." Because of the multiple instructional modalities offered, these support services also are offered in multiple modalities (online via chat, email, or conferencing software; in person; via telephone, etc.) and in locations throughout the Greater Phoenix metropolitan area where courses and programs are offered. These support services will be described in detail in Criterion 3.D.

Enrollment Profile

RSC's enrollment profile is consistent with its stated mission. The [current student population](#) includes online learners, adult education, dual enrollment, corporate and government partnership programs, military and veteran, incarcerated re-entry, and students from across the country through its [National Division](#). These cohorts include many nontraditional students that require accessible education outside of a typical college campus or program.

5.

RSC presents the college vision, mission, purpose statement, strategic plan, and engagement practices on its [public website](#) as well as the [website of the Rio National Division](#). In addition, the [mission is shared](#) in the weekly employee newsletter, in the college catalog, on screensavers for staff computers, and via a [culture page](#) that is posted in public spaces throughout college buildings across all locations. Activities are conducted at biweekly All Employee Meetings and monthly Supervisor's Meetings to inculcate the mission into departmental work across the college and connect the work of employees with the mission documents.

As further examples of publicly sharing the mission, President Kate Smith has articulated RSC's mission-driven approach in heralding new 2021 partnerships such as the [American Public University System \(APUS\)](#), [President's Forum Learners First Framework](#) call to action, [Guild Education](#), and [Brandman University](#).

Sources

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- MCCCCD_Governing Board Agenda Consent Agenda_1.A.1.pdf
- MCCCCD_Governing Board Agenda Consent Agenda_1.A.1.pdf (page number 2)
- MCCCCD_Governing Values_1.A.1
- RSC_Academic Programs_1.A.4
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- RSC_Culture_Educational Purposes_1.A.2
- RSC_Fact Sheet_Who We Serve_1.A.4
- RSC_Goal Alignment to Mission_1.A.2
- RSC_Guild Education Partnership_1.A.5
- RSC_Learners First Framework Initiative_1.A.5
- RSC_Mission Documents_1.A.1
- RSC_National Division Website_1.A.5
- RSC_National Division_1.A.4
- RSC_The Wave_Mission_1.A.5

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

Argument

1.

Rio Salado College demonstrates its commitment to the public good through a wide array of services and programs.

Hosting Community Events

RSC responds to its constituencies by sponsoring and co-sponsoring special events hosted by organizations that share a common goal with the College or depend on it for service. This extensive involvement in [community events](#) includes a diverse spectrum of activities geared towards specific organizations and community groups.

Community Sponsorships

Over the past five years, RSC has spent just under \$115,000 on [community sponsorships](#) that benefit diverse community agencies and programs.

Community- and Student-focused Examples

- **Valley of the Sun United Way Campaign**

As part of a district-wide initiative, RSC participates in the annual Valley of the Sun United Way campaign for Maricopa County. In the 2018 campaign year, [RSC received the Chancellor's Cup](#) for the highest percentage of employee participation.

- **Full Cart Program**

The [Full Cart Program](#), which was launched in 2018 as an RSC partnership with Feeding Children Everywhere, demonstrates the College's commitment to helping its students and their families cope with food insecurity. During FY2019-20, RSC provided over 13,500 food servings to students needing assistance.

- **Rio Gives Back**

[#Rio Gives Back](#) was an all-employee initiative undertaken in 2018 to celebrate RSC's 40th anniversary in a meaningful way by performing 40 acts of community service. Approximately 350 employees contributed over 1,300 hours of [community service](#) across a broad spectrum of charitable projects and services. Additionally, the Dental Hygiene Program, along with its annual "Give Kids a Smile" event, provided a [free dental clinic for veterans](#) in need, in partnership with the Central Arizona Dental Society Foundation.

- **Dash with Splash**

[Dash with Splash](#), a faculty-inspired annual 5K running/walking event for employees and their families, promotes community engagement and visibility while simultaneously supporting fundraising efforts and community outreach. The event has raised \$4,715, with proceeds going to the Jo C. Bennett Student Assistance Fund, described below.

Student Scholarships and Grants

- **Student Assistance Fund**

The [Jo C. Bennett Student Assistance Fund](#) targets RSC's general student population who encounter financial hardship that impedes their ability to succeed. This fund provides support for needs ranging from rent, childcare, transportation, and utility payments to textbooks and tuition. In the past three fiscal years, the fund has paid out \$22,315 to students in need.

- **Employee Donation Campaigns**

The Employee Giving Campaign, an annual internal RSC fundraising event that gave employees an opportunity to make financial contributions toward scholarships, culminated in FY2018-19 with contributions in excess of \$13,000 which surpassed the \$10,000 goal by 31%. The opportunity for employee donations resumed in FY2020-21 with an MCCC-led [Be a Student's Hero](#) campaign, directing funds to students in need via the Jo C. Bennett Student Assistance Fund. RSC employees contributed over \$7,000 in this initial year of the campaign.

- **Student Laptop Checkout Program**

A [laptop checkout program](#) was launched in 2021 to improve access and reduce the digital skills gap for location students.

- **RSC Library Hotspot Grant**

As a complement to the laptop checkout program at the locations, the RSC Library was awarded a \$4,000 [Library Services & Technology \(LSTA\) grant](#) from the Arizona State Library in May 2021. The grant allowed the library to purchase hotspots and data service for deployment to RSC location students in fall 2021.

Division of Public Service

RSC's [Division of Public Service](#) brings value to the community through two public radio stations, the Sun Sounds of Arizona reading service, the SPOT 127 Youth Media Center, and the [Hear Arizona podcast initiative](#). All are publicly-supported and provide culturally-enriching programming for the citizens of Maricopa County and beyond.

- KJZZ 91.5 FM is a listener-supported public radio station featuring a mix of local, national, and international news (including *Fronteras Desk* coverage, detailed in Criterion 1.C.2), jazz, and blues. During the first six months of 2021, Nielsen Audio ratings data indicate that KJZZ broadcast to more than 120,000 listeners every day and streamed its signal to computers and mobile devices an average 560,600 hours per month. KJZZ has won multiple awards for news reporting, and in 2019 was one of only four stations in the large market radio category to earn seven prestigious [Edward R. Murrow regional awards](#).
- KBACH 89.5 FM is the only radio station in Phoenix that plays classical music 24/7. The station supports local arts organizations, and each week showcases premier local performances from throughout the state. In the first six months of 2021, Nielsen Audio ratings data indicate that KBACH broadcast to more than 62,000 listeners every day and streamed to computers and mobile devices an average of 357,600 hours per month.

The KJZZ and KBACH membership operations generate close to \$6 million annually through sustaining gifts, direct mail, and pledge drives. An additional \$2.4 million is generated through corporate underwriting support.

Rio Salado College Dental Clinic

The [RSC Dental Clinic](#) provides preventive dental hygiene care to community members while enabling dental hygiene students to gain practical educational experience, overseen by licensed program instructors. In addition, the Clinic participates in [Annual Free Dental Clinic for Kids](#) events sponsored by the Arizona Dental Foundation that are designed to enable disadvantaged children aged 17 and younger to receive free prophylactic dental care. As an example, in 2018 (RSC's 40th anniversary year), dental hygiene students, instructors, and alumni provided care to 124 children, who received 690 dental procedures worth close to \$43,000.

Café at Rio

The [Café at Rio](#) has been a ground-breaking concept since inception, whereby RSC combined the basic need for food service provision to students and employees with an academic program ([Sustainable Food Systems](#)) grounded in the College's core value of sustainable practices. The program offers classes and events that are free or at nominal charge to community members. These [programs](#) serve to both inform and assist lower-income families with healthy alternatives for meals and snacks. Further, through catering relationships and partnerships with [local producers](#), the Café is stimulating the local economy while reducing environmental impact. In fall 2021, the Café embarked on two new [partnerships benefiting vulnerable populations](#) that exemplify the RSC commitment to making a difference in the local community.

Results from a [2019 Café employee survey](#) (N = 85) indicate that the Café continues to provide excellent customer service and an excellent dining experience, with 97.64% and 82.35% agreement, respectively. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated they would recommend the Café to a friend.

2.

As stated in the broadest [Outcome Statement](#) of the MCCCCD Governing Board: *“As an educational institution devoted to learning, Maricopa Community Colleges exist in order that the diverse communities served have effective, innovative, learner-centered, flexible, and affordable life-long educational opportunities, with outcomes optimizing use of available resources.”*

Within this context, the Board's outcomes for the 10 Maricopa colleges are:

- University Transfer Education and General Education
- Workforce and Economic Development
- Developmental Education
- Community Development and Civic and Global Engagement

These educational responsibilities filter directly to the individual colleges as units of the District. As a result, RSC has no relationship with investor interests or other external relationships.

3.

Engaging with the Community—Boards and Committees

RSC President Kate Smith utilizes a [President's Advisory Council](#) whose members are representative of RSC's partnerships with employers, community-based organizations, state and municipal agencies, and other educational institutions. This diverse constituency provides the president and executive leadership with perspectives relating to college strategic priorities, helps identify new opportunities and markets, and provides advice and assistance related to external challenges and political issues. [Meetings](#) include a wide range of topics related to increasing RSC's ability to meet the educational needs of the communities it serves. Additionally, the president sits on a number of [local and national boards](#).

President Smith is also a [2020-21 Rising Presidents Fellow](#) of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program.

Professional and Community Memberships

RSC maintains active institutional membership in a large number of [professional and community organizations](#).

Corporate and Government Partnerships

RSC engages in [Educational Service Partnerships](#) (ESP) with business and industry partners and government entities, enabling students who are employed within specific industries and professions to earn college credit at their places of employment. A [Partnership Personalized Service Survey](#) that is utilized to measure the program's effectiveness is sent to ESP instructors, directors, and key contacts on a semi-annual basis and has elicited overwhelmingly positive feedback over the past two years (N=108) regarding importance of these higher education opportunities for employees and satisfaction with the RSC partnership.

Career and Technical Education

In response to community needs, RSC offered 26 Associate of Applied Science Degrees and 98 Certificates of Completion for a total of 124 workforce awards in FY2020-21, including 12 new programs to meet evolving demands.

As further evidence of RSC's engagement with its external constituencies, a [Micro-Credentials survey](#) was conducted in summer 2021 in collaboration with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce to explore further educational programming opportunities, in direct alignment with RSC Strategic Plan Goal 2.

Locations: Serving Local Communities and Targeted Populations

In keeping with its nontraditional structure, RSC has operated through a number of [locations](#) throughout the greater Phoenix area since its inception in 1978, working with local communities to provide programming in facilities that have been established in high-need areas. These include underserved populations, first-generation college students, those who have not completed high school, and families needing college orientation services. The locations primarily offer adult education programs and classes, as well as a range of student support services. [Presentations and events](#) provide information about educational opportunities and enriching cultural experiences.

After a study of zip codes to determine the area with the largest concentration of RSC students, the [RSC Northern](#) location was set up with a [One-Stop Student Services Center](#); a prototype established in July 2021 whereby essential in-person student services were centralized and extended from the Tempe location.

Veterans and Military

- **Military and Veteran Success Centers (MVSCs)**

RSC has a long-standing tradition of serving military communities in Maricopa County, and became an officially-designated [Arizona Veteran Supportive Campus](#) (AVSC) in December, 2014. The College has been instrumental in establishing a community presence through regional Military and Veteran Success Centers (MVSCs). The MCCCDC currently services the [MVSC East](#) remotely, via email or telephone. In May 2021, RSC joined a coalition of community leaders to establish a new [MVSC West](#) location in Surprise, Arizona. The Center is ramping up to provide a variety of military and veteran support services and resources, beginning with a [Be Connected](#) navigator and a full-time AmeriCorps member to help military personnel and their families access benefits and other services.

- **RSC at Luke Air Force Base (AFB)**

RSC has served the [Luke military community](#) since 1979. Coursework offered includes classes required for airmen to complete all general education requirements for the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) associate degree. RSC Luke provides admissions, testing, and academic advising services, and operates a National Test Center (NTC) with exams offered at no cost to all eligible service members, families, and employees. In fiscal years 2018 and 2019, the Luke NTC was recognized as one of the [Top 25 National Military Test Centers](#).

The RSC Veterans Services office is audited by both the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office and the State Approving Agency.

Incarcerated Re-Entry Programs

RSC's [Incarcerated Re-Entry programs](#) constitute a partnership with the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) designed to provide skills training in high-demand occupations that promote employability upon release. To complement the coursework, RSC trains students who may then be placed in jobs through the ADC, allowing them the opportunity to gain work experience during incarceration. In addition to these on-site educational opportunities, the program provides the inmate population with access to correspondence classes, thereby presenting an opportunity for earning college credit which may lead to Certificates of Completion and the opportunity to earn a degree. IRE

students earned [461 awards](#) in FY2019-20.

Higher Learning Advocates published an August 2021 article by an RSC student who articulated his inspiring [second chance at education](#) as a result of enrollment in the incarcerated program.

Program Advisory Committees

Program Advisory Committees constitute a platform whereby community members and industry leaders provide expertise to inform curriculum for occupational programs. Advisory Committee members work with Faculty Chairs in program development and review, serving as content experts and practicing specialists. Examples include [Computer Technology](#), [Dental Programs](#), and the [Sustainable Food Systems Program](#).

NACCTEP (National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs)

RSC supports the work of [NACCTEP](#), an organization supporting community college teacher education programs with the stated mission "to advocate and promote the value of community college teacher education programs by fostering an innovative, diversified workforce through encouraging partnerships and effective best practices."

Education 2020 Conference

The RSC Alumni Association co-hosted *Education 2020* in March 2020 in conjunction with the F2 Family Foundation, Inc. This conference for pre-service and in-service educators, alumni, and community members provided professional development in the areas of dyslexia, ethics, and suicide prevention strategies, as well as legislative updates. Speakers included community experts, educators, and legislators.

Sources

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- AZ Veteran Supportive Campus_1.B.3
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- Higher Learning Advocates_A Second Chance at Higher Education_1.B.3
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- RSC_40 Acts Community Service_1.B.1
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- RSC_Incarcerated ReEntry Programs_1.B.3
- RSC_Jo C Bennett Student Assistance Fund_1.B.1
- RSC_Laptop Checkout Program_1.B.1
- RSC_Local and National Boards_1.B.3
- RSC_Location Events_1.B.3
- RSC_Locations_1.B.3
- RSC_Luke Air Force Base_1.B.3
- RSC_MVSC East_1.B.3
- RSC_MVSC West_1.B.3
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- RSC_Professional Memberships_1.B.3
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- RSC_Program Advisory Committee_Dental_1.B.3
- RSC_Program Advisory Committee_Sustainable Food Systems_1.B.3
- RSC_Rio Gives Back_1.B.1
- RSC_Sustainable Food Systems_1.B.1
- RSC_United Way Chancellor Cup_1.B.1
- Top 25 National Military Test Centers_1.B.3

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Argument

1.

Adult Education Programming

RSC is the principal provider of GED test preparation programs for the MCCCDC, and the largest provider of [adult education courses](#) in Arizona, offering its award-winning program at six RSC community-based locations across Maricopa County. [The RSC Adult Education program](#) prepares first-generation, underserved, and underprepared students for [college and career success](#). Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the program aligns [Integrated Education and Training](#) (IET) programming with needs identified in the Maricopa County and City of Phoenix Local Workforce Plans.

The Adult Education program has been selected by the Arizona Department of Education as the [ABE/ASE Excelling Program and Adult Education Program of the Year](#) for the past three consecutive years. The six community-based RSC locations also serve as Opportunity Youth (OY) full-service re-engagement centers through the [Opportunities for Youth](#) initiative.

RSC's approach to the specific needs of adult students is exemplified by an article authored by President Smith in [THE Campus](#) in fall 2021, focusing on nontraditional approaches to fostering student success.

Adults Achieving a College Education (Adult ACE)

[Adult ACE](#) is a two-year scholarship program for first-generation minority students who wish to complete a degree, certificate, or workforce training program. The program received the [2019 First Generation Advocate Award](#) for advancing student success. Students also participate in [co-curricular activities](#) that expose them to civic, cultural, and academic experiences outside of the classroom and prepare them for workplace and college success.

Honors

The [Honors Program](#) at RSC supports students' civic engagement and community enrichment by offering community service and [co-curricular](#) opportunities. Honors students engage as informed

citizens, conduct research projects, and [present at conferences](#) to share their knowledge. The Honors Program will be discussed further in Criterion 3.B.4.

Phi Theta Kappa

[Phi Theta Kappa](#) (PTK), the international honor society for two-year colleges, encourages scholarship and promotes leadership, service, and fellowship. The [award-winning RSC Alpha Theta Omicron chapter](#) enrolled a total of 642 new members in the three years spanning FY2019-21.

Additional Curricular and Cocurricular Opportunities

RSC participates in district-wide initiatives designed to prepare diverse student populations for life and workplace success. The [High School ACE](#) (Achieving a College Education) program helps underrepresented high school students accelerate learning and career readiness through access to college-level coursework during their junior and senior years. In 2020, RSC offered the only [online high school ACE program](#) in the District.

RSC's chapter of the [Male Empowerment Network](#), an MCCCDCD program, assists male minority students with enrollment, retention, degree completion, and career opportunities. For example, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the anniversary of his "I Have a Dream" speech in 2019, [RSC Southern hosted a MEN meeting](#) to engage students outside of the classroom and provide career and academic resources.

RSC also encourages students to prepare for informed citizenship and workplace success through national leadership participation. The [National Adult Education Honor Society](#) (NAEHS) recognizes RSC's students studying to earn a high school equivalency diploma or learn English. RSC [inducts approximately 25 adult education students](#) into the NAEHS each year. Further, [RSC's chapter](#) of the [National Society of Leadership and Success](#) (NSLS) helps students build leadership skills while also working on their educational, career, and personal goals.

Other opportunities offered to RSC students include:

- [National entrepreneurship celebration events](#) to recognize entrepreneurs for economic innovation throughout history as part of National Entrepreneurship Week, a congressionally-chartered initiative, and annual [Big Pitch](#) competitions for [student entrepreneurs](#)
- [Virtual Summer Camp](#) and [Career Night](#) events to prepare students for workplace success in the growing risk management and insurance industry
- Civic enrichment, such as [Constitution Day activities](#), [voter registration events](#), and [MCCCDCD student senate participation](#)
- [MVET](#), an MCCCDCD constituency group that provides support, encouragement, and educational opportunities for veteran employees, students, and their families

2.

The MCCCDCD system values diversity and highlights [inclusiveness as a governing value](#). The MCCCDCD [Administrative Regulation Section 5 Non-Discrimination](#) outlines the policies that serve to prohibit discrimination against applicants, employees, or students in any of its processes. RSC includes diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) as a college value and strategic planning goal. The college practices, designs processes, and takes action focused on the inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations. The [Office of Conduct and Community Standards](#) is available to

assist students in understanding their rights and responsibilities and administers the [Student Code of Conduct](#) policies and procedures.

Diversity practices relating to hiring and employment will be addressed in Criterion 3.C.1.

Developmental Education Redesign

In FY2018-19, the MCCCCD embarked on a transformation process to increase access and success while decreasing equity gaps. A more holistic approach to developmental education was created to include three categories of support (Academic, Basic Needs, and Student Development). A [Basic Needs website](#) was created and shared across the District to help connect students with support services for needs such as food, housing, and transportation. Furthermore, placement policies and procedures were standardized across all 10 MCCCCD colleges to qualify at least 80% of students to begin college-level English, math, and reading in their first semester, with appropriate support. Further information on Developmental Education redesign will follow in Criterion 4.C.3.

Inclusive Processes and Activities

- **Student-Centered Entry Processes**

RSC has developed customized web tools to guide entering students. [Become a Student](#) features information tailored to the educational goals of diverse students. They receive guidance to choose from program-specific pathways and services, including a mix of in-person and online options for specific populations such as degree-seeking, guest students, transfer students, military, dual enrollment, adult education, teacher education, and out-of-state.

- **Disability Services**

RSC's [Office of Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS) offers resources and services that promote accessible learning for students with documented disabilities, in keeping with [MCCCCD Administrative Regulation 2.8](#).

- **Accessibility Council**

RSC's Accessibility Council, composed of faculty members and staff from IT, Instructional Design, Course Production, and Disability Services, addresses accessibility issues in RSC courses and provides employees across the college with [resources, tools, and training](#) to design products with inclusivity and equitable access for all stakeholders.

- **Sun Sounds of Arizona**

[Sun Sounds of Arizona](#), part of the Division of Public Service described in Criterion 1.B.1, provides audio access to information to those who cannot read print owing to a disability. Over 400 volunteers from around Arizona read newspapers and other publications, delivering this free service to a potential 650,000 people statewide, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Those interested in the service can listen for free via specially-provided radios, smart speakers, a live stream online, or on-demand programs.

- **RISE Learning for Life**

The RSC Surprise location is home to [RISE Learning for Life](#), which offers non-credit community

learning events to retirement-age adults seeking continuing education and peer interaction. RISE volunteer content experts present numerous topics, ranging through history, science, arts, humanities, and current events. RISE is a self-directed organization, one of over 200 Institutes for Learning in Retirement in the nation. In FY2019-20, RISE facilitated 511 learning events for 530 members, with an average attendance of 13 participants per event.

- **International Education**

The [International Education Center](#) supports international students with personalized services to select and register for classes. In the three years spanning FY2018-20, International Education served 3,370 walk-in students and responded to 5,502 telephone inquiries.

Further RSC activities honoring and serving diverse learners were discussed under *Additional Curricular and Cocurricular Opportunities* in Criterion 1.C.1.

Fronteras Desk

RSC's Division of Public Service, described in Criterion 1.B.1, hosts the [Fronteras Desk](#) on KJZZ, with under-served and under-reported news deserts at the core of its mission. Fronteras Desk reporters spearhead the coverage of diverse communities for KJZZ and NPR. These reports have had regional, national, and international distribution to an estimated 10 million listeners through NPR and more than 400 public radio affiliates across the country. A Fronteras Desk team series, [Tracing The Migrant Journey](#), received a [2020 Kaleidoscope Award](#) which recognizes journalistic excellence in covering issues of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity. KJZZ was one of only five national winners, taking top honors in the Local Radio category.

SPOT 127

[SPOT 127](#), KJZZ's youth media center, has [two locations](#) designed to mentor disadvantaged youth in journalism and digital media production at no cost. Seventy-one percent of students served by SPOT 127 West and 29% of students at SPOT 127 East identify as Hispanic or Latino. The program has served approximately 1,900 students since its inception in 2012. In FY2020-21, almost 300 teens took virtual classes as programs were moved online.

Hispanic-Serving Institution

In May 2021, the U.S. Department of Education recognized RSC as one of nine [Hispanic Serving Institutions](#) (HSI) in the MCCC. This status as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) makes RSC eligible for Title V grant funding. In alignment with this status, Goal 3 of the Student Enrollment Management (SEM) plan is centered on increasing underrepresented student recruitment, retention, and completion (see Criterion 4.C.1.). Further outreach to Latinx students is planned via an MCCC contract with [The College Tour](#) on Amazon Prime to produce segments in both English and Spanish.

Civil Rights Review

RSC was chosen randomly for an Arizona Department of Education (ADE) [Civil Rights Review](#) of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in fall 2020. The College submitted over 700 pages of evidence to ADE as part of this review, which was satisfactorily concluded.

3.

Employee Onboarding, Training and Support

As part of RSC's continuous quality improvement processes, all staff, faculty, and administrators engage in extensive [onboarding](#), receive ongoing departmental support and training, and gain access to MCCCDC training and leadership opportunities. The [Rio Wave](#) onboarding process will be described in detail in Criterion 5.B.1. In year one, participants immerse in the *4 Practices of Engagement*, with further connection of these practices to the *values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)* in year two.

The 4 Practices of Engagement

The [4 Practices of Engagement](#) initiative explores the tenets of mindfulness, empathy, happiness, and resilience. The program, which forms the cornerstone of RSC's innovative and positive culture, was launched at the spring 2019 college-wide meeting, followed by a series of workshops offered in FY2019-20 by external consultants. The series provided a deeper dive into the meaning and application of each of the practices in the workplace, also allowing employees to interact with colleagues across all departments and college locations. Fourteen training sessions were presented to 356 participants.

In FY2020-21, RSC contracted with the same consultants to build on the *4 Practices* in a deeper context [focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging](#). These events were [conducted remotely](#) and employed open dialogue and current events to explore such topics as race, equity, micro- and macro-aggressions, unconscious bias, difficult but [courageous conversations](#), and more.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

One of the eight pathways of the 2016-19 RSC Strategic Plan was titled *Employee Trust and Value*, and a [Trust and Value Committee](#) was formed under the auspices of the Development Team, charged with nurturing trust and conveying value through engagement with employees across the College. While RSC had long presented programming around diversity topics, an initial goal for this committee was to [develop a Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council](#) to formalize and expand extensive programming around the tenets of diversity and inclusion.

RSC recognized that it could further institutionalize existing efforts to build an inclusive and equity-minded environment for both students and employees. A DEIB taskforce was formed in summer 2020, comprising employees across a wide spectrum of departments and roles, and multiple [Equity Action Sessions and Forums](#) were held for students and employees during FY2020-21 to support open dialog between stakeholders with a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas, and perspectives. In its 2020-24 Strategic Plan, RSC established a formal DEIB goal: *Foster a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging*, and expanded the taskforce to create a formal DEIB Council. With direct support from the President's Office, RSC identified a highly-qualified senior employee to serve as [DEIB officer](#), while membership in the DEIB Council was expanded to include more employees from all levels across the college. The Council meets monthly and evaluates current RSC processes and practices through an equity and inclusion lens, making recommendations to executive leadership and other stakeholders who then prioritize improvements to enhance the climate of respect between students, faculty, staff, and administrators. A [DEIB page](#) on the public website includes the RSC philosophy, definitions, and additional resources for students and employees.

In support of this fundamental strategic area, the RSC Library creates [DEIB Research Guides](#) that provide additional educational resources and further heightened awareness around these topics for

students and employees. These guides are featured in the weekly employee newsletter and on RSC social media platforms.

DEIB Events

Numerous informational and educational activities and events are geared towards students and employees in recognition of diverse populations. Examples include:

- [Black History Month](#). A particularly significant community event was held in February 2019, when "Hidden Figures" NASA scientist [Dr. Christine Darden](#) visited RSC and conducted multiple presentations for students, employees, and the community.
- [Women's History Month](#)
- [Hispanic Heritage Month](#)
- [Native American Heritage Month](#)
- [National Jewish Heritage Month](#)
- [Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Pride Month](#)
- [Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)
- Annual [MLK events](#) attracting nearly 300 participants to discuss equality and civil rights
- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) including a [virtual movie camp](#) in summer 2021

RSC Book Club

The RSC Book Club was established in summer 2019 "to provide a platform that allows employees to invest in personal and professional development, connect and engage with colleagues across departments, and advance perspectives in the area of diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging." Beginning with 12 participants in its first session, the Book Club has drawn increasingly robust participation in the reading and discussion of an eclectic selection of thought-provoking books, with close to 50 participants in summer 2021. [Survey feedback](#) is overwhelmingly positive and provides validation of the success of this initiative in engendering meaningful discussion and connection among employees. Survey comments and suggestions are also shared with the Executive Team.

Internal RSC Communication Strategies

Meaningful internal communication strategies are seen as a critical element of fostering a climate of inclusion and respect between RSC's employees.

RSC's weekly online employee newsletter, [The Wave](#), keeps employees connected, informed, and engaged. Articles include updates of current importance, mission enculturation, strategic planning updates, employee workshop and event opportunities, inspirational student success stories, employee recognition, and more. [Analytics data](#) indicate that over 500 readers view the newsletter each week. *The Wave* also provides the opportunity to schedule an individual meeting with President Smith through Open Office Hours or provide feedback/ask questions via the [CommuniKate with the President](#) feature, anonymously if preferred. In the first two years of implementation, 71 employees have submitted [questions, suggestions, or concerns](#) through the CommuniKate portal.

[Biweekly college-wide meetings](#) have been held regularly via Zoom [since spring 2020](#), providing an opportunity for employees to feel connected and engaged, and to receive regular and transparent updates and information on current initiatives from the President's Office and departments across the college. Attendance ranges between 230 and 315 participants per meeting, and there is a "meet and

greet" segment both prior to- and after the formal meeting so that employees can "visit" with colleagues and feel connected.

Departmental Alignment with Strategic Plan Goal 3: *Foster a Culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

As of fall 2021, multiple RSC departments have set "[Wildly Important Goals](#)" to implement meaningful change in the DEIB arena which are being tracked through the strategic planning process. As an example, RSC has committed \$45,000 to train three cohorts of 30 each in [ACUE Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning](#) as part of its commitment to Goal 3. Residential faculty, adjunct faculty, instructional designers, instructional coordinators and others are being [invited to apply](#). Detailed information on the Strategic Plan will follow in Criterion 5.C.3.

MCCCD Programs

- [MOSAIC](#) (Maximizing Our Strengths as An Inclusive Community), is a 24-hour professional development workshop focusing on diversity, inclusion, and valuing differences. The training is required for MCCCD supervisors and available to all employees.
- MCCCD provides [career development](#) and [mentoring programs](#) to connect employees from diverse backgrounds to share ideas and perspectives across the district.
- The MCCCD provides [diversity and inclusion training](#) through the District Employee Learn Center.

MCCCD Diversity Advisory Council

The MCCCD [Diversity Advisory Council](#) (DAC) presents an annual award to an employee or program at each college that exemplifies a commitment to supporting student success, workforce development, or innovation through diversity and inclusiveness efforts, as evidenced by the [RSC DAC Award recipients](#) from the past four years.

Sources

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- [ACUE_Micro Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning_1.C.3](#)
- [ADE_Civil Rights Closeout Letter_1.C.2](#)
- [Community College Daily_Conversations that Change Campuses_1.C.3](#)
- [Hispanic Serving Institutions_1.C.2](#)
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- [KJZZ_SPOT 127 Locations_1.C.2](#)
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- [MCCCD_Diversity and Inclusion Training_1.C.3](#)
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- MCCCCD_Mentoring_1.C.3
- MCCCCD_MOSAIC_1.C.3
- MCCCCD_Student Senate_1.C.1
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- RSC_Adults Achieving a College Education_1.C.1
- RSC_Americans with Disabilities Act_1.C.3
- RSC_Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month_1.C.3
- RSC_Become a Student_1.C.2
- RSC_Big Pitch Competition_1.C.1
- RSC_Black History Month_1.C.3
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- RSC_Collegewide Meeting Slides_1.C.3
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- RSC_Onboarding_1.C.3
- RSC_Phi Theta Kappa Rio Accomplishments_1.C.1
- RSC_Phi Theta Kappa_1.C.1
- RSC_Rio Wave Orientation_1.C.3
- RSC_Risk Management and Insurance Career Night_1.C.1
- RSC_Student Conference Presentations_1.C.1
- RSC_Student Entrepreneurs_1.C.1
- RSC_The Wave Analytics Data_1.C.3
- RSC_The Wave_1.C.3
- RSC_Trust and Value Committee Projects_1.C.3
- RSC_Virtual Movie Camp_1.C.3
- RSC_Virtual Summer Camp_1.C.1
- RSC_Voter Registration and Voting Events_1.C.1
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1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

Summary

- RSC's mission documents were revised in 2020 as part of a collaborative strategic planning process that included student, staff, and community input.
- The mission documents guide RSC's operations through clearly-articulated alignment between the mission, strategic plan, and institutional structure; comprehensive and personalized student services; and instructional programs that exemplify its educational purposes and equitable access values.
- RSC's innovative, positive, and inclusive culture has been refreshed through adoption of the *4 Practices of Engagement* and the formation of a DEIB council.
- RSC has a strong presence in the local community through its Division of Public Service, multiple college locations, workforce partnerships, and location-based adult education programming.

Sources

There are no sources.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 2.A

The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Argument

1.

The process whereby RSC developed its current revised mission documents and subsequent [approval by the MCCCCD Governing Board](#) were described in Criterion 1.A.

2.

The Governing Board and employees of the MCCCCD abide by a set of [Governing Values](#), which are published on the District website and are transparent to all stakeholders.

The [MCCCCD Governing Board](#) has established a [Code of Conduct](#) that determines expectations for ethical, professional, and lawful conduct by board members and outlines a process for complaints and perceived violations of Board policy. Governing Board members are required to participate in [Public Stewardship and Ethics Training](#) during their probationary period or within one year of hire, and triennially thereafter. Similarly, the MCCCCD mandates triennial [integrity and ethics training](#) for all employees.

All [mandatory training modules](#) are provided online, enabling efficient tracking of employee completion. Additional role-specific mandatory training requirements are in place, such as the [MCCCCD Employee FERPA Compliance Tutorial](#) required for all employees who access student records.

The [Governing Board Policies](#) and [Administrative Regulations](#) provide the framework for employees' duties and responsibilities. Each employee is expected to be aware of and abide by these rules. In order to foster accountability and transparency, employees are required to submit [annual disclosure forms](#) regarding conflict of interest, hiring of relatives, enrollment irregularities, internal control, and travel policies.

MCCCCD and RSC ethical hiring practices are detailed in Criterion 5.B.1.

The MCCCCD maintains a [Staff Policy Manual](#) for appointed, classified staff and non-classified

MCCCD employees. The [classified staff grievance procedure](#) is included in this manual.

Residential and adjunct faculty rights are stipulated in the [Faculty Agreement](#) adopted by the Governing Board in February 2021 and effective as of July 1, 2021. This agreement replaced the separate Residential Faculty Policies (RFP) and the Adjunct Faculty Handbook which had previously existed as two separate documents. [Article 20](#) covers Resolution of Conflict and Grievance policies. More information on the FACT process and agreement will follow in Criterion 2.C.5.

All policies stem from interest-based negotiation processes conducted by representatives of District and College administration, along with members of the relevant employee groups.

Adherence to Federal, State, City, and District Laws and Regulations

RSC, together with the other MCCCD colleges, upholds and protects its integrity by following all applicable federal, state, local, and district regulations. The [MCCCD Office of General Counsel](#) advises MCCCD institutions regarding strict legal compliance with these laws and regulations.

Office of Institutional Integrity & Compliance

RSC's [Office of Institutional Integrity & Compliance](#) falls under the purview of the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness & Innovation (who also serves as the HLC Accreditation Liaison Officer) and serves as a centralized hub for compliance efforts, including State Authorization and adherence to the various mandates related to the Higher Education Act, among others. Working closely with key stakeholders across the College, Institutional Integrity ensures that compliance begins with program creation and stems out into the operational areas of the institution (as evidenced by this [program development flowchart](#)). Further, the Curriculum Department meets with all internal stakeholders identified in the first step of the process to discuss programs that have been Governing Board approved, and next steps regarding compliance. The Office also manages a Compliance Calendar that will be further explained in Criterion 2.B.2.

Office of Conduct and Community Standards

Following the provisions in Administrative Regulation [2.5 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the RSC [Office of Conduct and Community Standards](#) (OCCS) is designed “to help ensure a healthy, comfortable and educationally productive environment for students, employees, and visitors” (para. 1, section 2.5.2) and to be “committed to promoting a learning and work environment that is non-discriminatory” as stated in [Administrative Regulation Section 5 Non-Discrimination](#) (para.1).

Within the Office of Conduct and Community Standards, the functional areas are Student Conduct Administration; Title IX; Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT); and Office of Academic Integrity. The administrative procedures for academic misconduct, student conduct administration, and Title IX are outlined respectively in the [MCCCD Administrative Regulations: 2.3.11 Academic Misconduct Policy](#); [S-6 Instructional Grievance Process](#); [2.5 Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), which includes the [Student Conduct Code](#) (i.e., prohibited conduct) and the [Student Conduct Procedures](#) (e.g., the convening of a Student Conduct Board Hearing); and [5.1.16 Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#). All members of the Title IX team receive [Title IX Training and Resources](#).

Instructional Grievances and Non-Instructional Complaints

RSC provides detailed information for students regarding the [MCCCD instructional grievance](#) and [non-instructional complaint resolution](#) processes from its [Student Solution Center](#) website.

Instructional student issues that are escalated to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for resolution are resolved through the defined process, while Institutional Integrity & Compliance addresses non-instructional complaints.

Record Keeping

RSC maintains internal electronic systems to track and aggregate information for both academic and non-academic student complaints. Faculty determinations of academic misconduct violations and imposed academic consequences are maintained by the Office of Academic Integrity in RSC's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database.

Non-academic student complaints are maintained by the Office of Institutional Integrity & Compliance in the RSC Student Complaint Management System database (SCMS). Records include details of the complaint, the manner in which it was resolved, and any relevant findings. From 2017-2020, 97% of student complaints (n=648) were resolved to the student's satisfaction.

Records of alleged Student Conduct Code violations, Title IX misconduct (e.g., complaints, notice letters, available evidence, etc.) and reports to the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) pertaining to individuals of concern are maintained in the RSC Symplicity Advocate case management and reporting system database. Employees are able to [submit reports to the BIT](#) via an internal RSC link, and the team meets biweekly to review these reports which encompass such concerns as potential disruptive conduct, self-harm, and violence to others.

Fiscal Integrity

The MCCCDCD is audited annually by the Arizona State Auditor General's Office. Copies of the audits are included in the District's [Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports](#) (CAFRs). The District has always received an unqualified audit report regarding its financial statements, most recently for the [Fiscal Year Ended June 2020](#).

The Arizona State Auditor General's Office is not permitted to issue audit reports for individual MCCCDCD colleges. Consequently, in 1996, the North Central Association and MCCCDCD created a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) to satisfy the need for an institutional external financial audit by a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or a public agency at least every two years. The memorandum was updated in 2004 to reflect the name change to Higher Learning Commission. The memorandum addresses criteria related to resources, uses, and assurances. It provides records that illustrate efficient management of individual expenditure budgets consistent with maintaining the fiscal viability of the District, demonstrating the integrity of the District and colleges.

The MCCCDCD [Internal Audit and Management Advisory Services Department](#) (IAMAS) supports the vision, mission, and values of the MCCCDCD and its colleges and centers by providing independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve the organization's operations, and to help ensure the efficient and effective use of resources, program operations, and stewardship over assets.

Grants Monitoring

The District Grants Development and Management Department provides compliance and support to college grant project directors with applicable rules, regulations, terms, and conditions for grants management. The RSC Grants Management Office supports research projects and provides fiscal

accountability for grant-funded projects.

Student Policies

RSC abides by the student policies established by the MCCCDC, which are articulated in the College Catalog and on the [Student Policies](#) page of the RSC website.

Auxiliary Functions

RSC's [Auxiliary Functions](#) include the Conference Center at Rio, which is a multi-purpose facility that hosts internal and external events, receptions, and conferences. The Vice President of Technology and Infrastructure oversees the staffing of the Conference Center. Open access is provided for Conference Center rentals, consistent with [AR 6.24 Public Access and Expression on District Property](#) [Free Expression Policy].

Department of Public Safety

The RSC [Department of Public Safety](#) is led by a police commander and is responsible for ensuring a safe college environment in accordance with [AR 6.15 Public Safety](#).

Sources

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- MCCCCD_Title IX Training and Resources_2.A.2
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- RSC_Office of Institutional Integrity and Compliance_2.A.2
- RSC_Program Development Flowchart_2.A.2
- RSC_Student Solution Center_2.A.2
- RSC_Symlicity Case Reporting_2.A.2

2.B - Core Component 2.B

The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.
2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

Argument

1.

Institutional Advancement Processes

The Institutional Advancement (IA) Department handles all aspects of creating and disseminating information about RSC to current and prospective students and community stakeholders, encompassing the functions of advertising, graphic design, the RSC Copy Center, media relations, and web design and development. IA works with the Office of Institutional Integrity & Compliance to verify that all website and marketing materials and policies adhere to accreditation and federal compliance guidelines, and with college stakeholders to ensure accuracy of content. The related website audit process is described in Criterion 2.B.2.

The RSC website, newsroom, and social media outlets see extensive traffic, and [analytics data](#) are consulted regularly to determine website usage and trends and to make adjustments as indicated.

Academic Offerings and Costs

- **College Catalog**

[The RSC College Catalog](#) contains information on academic programs, partnership programs, course descriptions, general education and transfer options, policies, procedures, student services, and community services. Additionally, the catalog functions as a static reference to academic programs for purposes of determining the catalog under which a student graduates. Primary access is provided online, with options available for populations in need of alternative delivery formats. Archived college catalogs dating back to 2001 are available on the [RSC catalog website](#).

- **Programs Website**

Details of [RSC Programs and Degrees](#) and [RSC Degrees and Certificates with Fields of Interest](#) are available on the college website. Information is provided for all programs, certificates (academic and occupational), and degrees offered, as well as district-wide associate degrees and additional learning opportunities and pathways.

- **Class Schedule**

The [class schedule](#) allows students to search for current course offerings in all modalities via several customizable search options, such as course prefix and weekly- or semester start date. RSC is transparent in providing students with cost information pertaining to [credit hour tuition rates and fees](#). A [tuition calculator](#) is also provided to assist with calculation of costs by credit hour versus flat rates, in-county, out-of-county, and out-of-state, including a tuition cap rate.

- **Syllabus Language**

In an effort to meet the needs of RSC students and provide consistency and clarity in the learning experience, all online course syllabi are standardized to contain district-approved course competencies/outcomes and a well-defined assessment methodology. [Standardized language](#) is included in all syllabi for basic elements such as academic misconduct, civility policy, active participation requirements, disability statement, Title IX information, and library services. Common elements such as course requirements, time requirements, testing procedures, final grade options, and copyright acknowledgements are incorporated across all disciplines and customized for the specific course.

- **State Authorization Disclosures**

RSC operates in states across the nation, both through individual state authorization/exemption and via participation in the national [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement](#) (SARA). The College is proactive in its communication with students in relation to state authorization, and a dedicated RSC website provides specific information regarding [program availability by state](#). In addition, state authorization maps are available on the college's website that educate students and advisors on state licensure and certification requirements. Required licensure/certification disclosures are automated through the CRM. These compliance efforts were recognized as [RSC's 2020-21 Innovation of the Year](#).

- **Institutional Effectiveness Reporting**

[The Department of Institutional Effectiveness](#) provides official annual reporting information on its website pertaining to diversity of enrollment and Pell recipients, retention rates, and graduation and transfer rates. In addition, the annual [College Fact Sheet](#) provides highlights about the College and statistical data regarding students and employees.

- **HEA Disclosures**

In conformance with the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA), RSC makes required disclosures to enrolled and prospective students, parents, employees, and the public via its [Consumer Information](#) website, as well as the college catalog.

- **Faculty and Staff Information**

Details about RSC [Leadership and Administration](#) and [Faculty](#) are provided on the public website, in the college catalog, and in other materials distributed to students and the community (e.g., college commencement program). Information includes academic qualifications and positions held.

Governance Structure and Accreditation

As noted previously, Rio Salado College operates under the purview of the Chancellor and the Board of the MCCC and is not beholden to shareholders or outside interests. RSC was established in 1978

and granted candidacy for regional accreditation status by the North Central Association at that time. Since 1981, the College has been continuously accredited and was last reaffirmed after a comprehensive visit in March 2012. In keeping with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requirements, RSC displays a [statement of accreditation](#) and the official logo link to the HLC website on its public website.

[Programmatic Accreditation](#) information and details are displayed for the following:

- Addictions and Substance Use Disorders
- Dental Programs
- Educator Preparation Programs
- Languages

The RSC [Student Solution Center](#) provides a single point of entry where students can report issues and file complaints in accordance with MCCCDC Administrative Regulations.

2.

Evidence of Compliance and Audit Procedures

- **Compliance Calendar and Committee**

The Office of Institutional Integrity & Compliance has created and manages a [compliance calendar](#), providing the means by which the college monitors and maintains compliance with the regulatory triad of federal regulations, state regulations, and accreditation/third party requirements. Items are monitored for both internal and external processes, and include a description of the regulation/requirement, links (where appropriate), action items, and a due date. The [College Compliance Committee meets](#) two to three times per year.

- **RSC Website Statement of Governance and Audit Process**

As indicated above, RSC's Institutional Advancement Department (IA) is responsible for all public website production. A [Website Governance Guide](#) was developed by representatives from IA, Institutional Integrity & Compliance, Quality Assurance, and Faculty, and approved by the Executive Team in fall 2021. The intent of the document was to provide clarity as to the structures, roles, responsibilities, policies, and processes involved in maintaining the RSC website; a critically important component for a nontraditional, online institution. As a requirement of website governance, all webpage owners complete an [annual audit](#) of the accuracy and integrity of their content, conducted through the Office of Institutional Integrity as part of the ongoing RSC compliance calendar.

Evidence of Educational Research Contributions

- **Predictive Analytics: RioPACE (Progress and Course Engagement)**

[RioPACE](#) is an in-house predictive analytics model built on historical data to help identify whether students are on track for successful online course completion. Course success is based on predictors such as login information, engagement with the course content (e.g., opening lesson content, completing assignments, viewing instructor feedback), points earned, etc. Success indicators on the course roster allow faculty to readily identify students who are at risk and launch proactive interventions to help them succeed. Similarly, the [student view of the indicators](#) serves as a “nudge”

for students to change or maintain their academic behaviors to increase their likelihood of success. PACE analytics are currently offered in 185 online courses, with a predictive success rate of approximately 93%.

- **Predictive Analytics: Student Engagement**

RSC engaged in a partnership with Civitas Learning to employ data-informed methodologies for increasing student persistence and completion. Using the Civitas Illume product, three targeted message campaigns were launched in spring 2019, directed at degree- or certificate-seeking student populations, but subsequent analysis did not find that Civitas Illume satisfactorily identified students and their projected persistence. As a result, an RSC team was formed to drive the development of an internal predictive overall student persistence tool. The new model builds on RioPACE by leveraging course engagement data and incorporating additional variables such as GPA, enrollment intensity, and degree-seeking status to predict students' likelihood of persisting into future coursework. Initial model testing throughout AY2020-21 showed the tool predicted successful student outcomes with up to 85% accuracy. Institutional Research, working with Information Services and Advisement teams, further refined the model and integrated the insights into RSC student information systems beginning in fall 2021. The benefit of an internally-developed tool is that the College was able to design the criteria driving the prediction, which will result in more customized and timely supports to students.

- **College Innovation Network (CIN)**

In August 2020, RSC became a founding member of the [College Innovation Network \(CIN\)](#), facilitated by WGU Labs, Inc. and designed to connect college and university leaders with innovators in educational technology (EdTech) with the goal of advancing students' academic, career, and life outcomes. All CIN founding institutions serve diverse students, including traditionally-underrepresented populations, with inclusive and broad access policies. Initial research into students enrolled at these institutions to investigate their learning experiences with EdTech was published in August 2021: [The New Digital Divide: How EdTech Self-Efficacy is Shaping the Online Student Learning Experience in Higher Ed](#). CIN plans an annual series of research studies to further explore these issues so that appropriate resources and support systems can be provided by the participating colleges to facilitate student success.

- **Educational Content Strategies: Open Educational Resources (OER)**

The [Maricopa Millions OER Project](#) was launched in 2013 to promote the adoption of low-cost and no-cost resources within MCCCDC courses. RSC has had representation on the OER Steering Team since inception of the initiative, now known as Open Maricopa. Within this paradigm, RSC has focused increasingly on educational content strategies over the past few years to identify digital course materials across all disciplines, with a "Day One Access" model that enables students to have immediate access to all course content (including textbook materials), compliant with accessibility standards, on their start date. As a subset of this work, there is a strong focus on adoption of OER materials. In FY2020-21, RSC offered 212 for-credit online courses using materials provided at no cost to students (31% of all courses). The College's continued transition to OER and low/no cost materials has saved students approximately \$1,694,800 to date.

Evidence of Community Engagement and Research: Student Contributions

RSC includes community-based learning among [the purposes](#) in its mission documents. Accordingly, students have the opportunity to participate in several community engagement activities as part of

their educational experience at the college. Several of these co-curricular opportunities were described in Criterion 1.C.1. Notable in terms of research are the following:

- **Phi Theta Kappa (PTK)**

As mentioned in Criterion 1.C.1, Phi Theta Kappa encourages scholarship and promotes leadership, service, and fellowship. PTK conducts an annual Honors-In-Action Project based on a theme tied in with a community project. In FY2020-21 the RSC chapter received one of only two [honors-in-action](#) grants in Arizona from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. PTK students engaged outside the classroom to complete their research project, *Perceptions of Progress*. Events included brown bags on topics such as [LGBTQ+](#) and [human trafficking](#). The chapter has again received grant money for FY2021-22. Students will conduct research and write a report on the LGBTQ+ community within the context of the broader theme *Resistance- Reform, Rebellion, Revolution*, and then conduct a community project based on the research results.

- **Honors Program**

The RSC Honors Program includes community volunteer activities among its co-curricular requirements (see Criterion 3.B.4).

Evidence of Community Engagement: Grants

The RSC Grants Management Office manages the processing of grants, some on an annual basis, that enable the College to pursue [grant-funded engagement with the community](#). RSC has been awarded an average of \$5.3M in annual grant funding during the past three fiscal years.

Evidence of Experiential Learning

RSC provides opportunities for experiential learning in three of its programs:

- **Dental Programs Service Hours**

Dental Hygiene Program students are required to complete 40 hours of community service as part of program requirements. Students also complete external rotations known as clinical enrichment experiences, in venues such as St. Vincent de Paul Dental Clinic and Dignity Health Children's Dental Clinic serving the homeless and disadvantaged, the Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health special needs clinic, and St. Joseph's Hospital ICU and Neurology units. As noted in Criterion 1.B.1, the RSC Dental Program hosts an annual free clinic to provide prophylactic dental care to disadvantaged children at no cost.

- **Paralegal Program Service Hours**

Rio Salado's Paralegal Program offers internship opportunities involving both education and practical work experience, requiring accrual of a minimum 80 hours during each semester. The internship lead instructor coordinates the process with students and assists in placement of interns.

- **Post-Baccalaureate Educator Preparation Field Experience**

Most courses in the EDU program require field experience in a pre-K through 12 classroom. Depending on the course, elements may include classroom observation, participation, teaching, and self-reflection.

Evidence of Contributions to Economic Development

As indicated in Criterion 1.B.2, RSC offers a total of 124 workforce awards. An Emsi 2019 analysis of the [economic value of Rio Salado College](#) used a two-pronged approach utilizing both economic impact analysis and investment analysis. Using FY2016-17 data, the study demonstrated RSC's significant positive impact (\$872.3 million in income to the Maricopa County economy, equivalent to supporting 10,904 jobs), as well as a positive return on investment to its students, taxpayers, and communities served.

Sources

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2.C - Core Component 2.C

The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

Argument

1.

The [MCCCD Governing Board](#) functions autonomously in its decision-making to ensure the integrity of each of the 10 community colleges and uphold the vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities of the District. The Governing Board includes seven elected officials and one student board member. Five of the seven elected positions are determined by geographic districts within the county, and the remaining two are at-large elected positions. Board members are elected for staggered four-year terms, which allows for continuity and stability of governance operations. The Board oversees the MCCCD Chancellor and shares information on important matters with the public.

The [Maricopa Governance](#) leadership model includes policies and [Administrative Regulations](#) that establish a framework for accountability for the Board's constituents. The [Governance Process](#) includes the training and preparation to conduct Board meetings in accordance with specific operational policies. [Governance Investment](#) stipulates that training and retraining will be "used appropriately to orient new members and to maintain and increase existing Board Member skills and knowledge" so that there is informed decision-making with regard "to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices." When the 1996 Governance leadership model was adopted, the Board transferred day-to-day [Fiscal Management](#) responsibilities to the Chancellor "subject to a formal approval process" for adoptions, amendments, and deletions.

Complaint to the Higher Learning Commission

In September 2018, HLC received a [complaint from the MCCCD Faculty Association](#) claiming that the Governing Board failed to make decisions in the best interest of MCCCD and was out of compliance with Core Component 2.C. HLC summarized the claims in [a letter to the MCCCD Chancellor](#) in October 2018. After review of a response submitted by the MCCCD Chancellor, HLC determined that a special area of focus would be included in the Gateway Community College (GWCC) Comprehensive Evaluation, since GWCC was the next MCCCD institution scheduled for a comprehensive evaluation at that time. The Governing Board and the Chancellor were required to

address [specific concerns \(excerpted from the Higher Learning Commission Response\)](#). To address these concerns, the Board received training from HLC President Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley on May 20, 2019, covering [The Legacy and Operations of an Effective Board](#). By so doing, MCCCDC acknowledged the importance of ongoing training for board members to ensure that they fulfill their responsibilities with integrity, fairness, and within the law.

Subsequently, the Board and the Chancellor, in collaboration with the 10 MCCCDC colleges, have established plans that include additional training for new- and existing board members concerning shared governance, the establishment of a cross-departmental/cross-college task force to refine the definition of shared governance, and protocols for board interactions with MCCCDC employees. At the January 12, 2021 Governing Board Work Session, members received a detailed presentation titled [Accreditation, Shared Governance and Academic Freedom](#). The [Maricopa Governance Change Crosswalk](#) is updated annually, and publicly shared information also includes the [Process for Approving Administrative Regulations](#).

2.

The priorities of the MCCCDC Governing Board, as stated in its [Governing Values](#) mission documents, are: University Transfer Education; General Education; Developmental Education; Workforce Development; Student Development Services; Continuing Education; Community Education; Civic Responsibility; Global Engagement.

These areas of focus are in keeping with the public stewardship responsibilities of one of the largest community college districts in the nation. Board members undertake to represent the residents of Maricopa County in “determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance,” as stated in the [Board Job Description](#).

3.

The Governing Board has identified [outcomes](#) that are in keeping with the mission of a public community college district serving its identified constituencies, which include the residents of Maricopa County, students at the MCCCDC colleges, private and public sector employers in Maricopa County, and other educational institutions in the County. These outcomes are measured via metrics intended to gauge institutional effectiveness, and published annually in a [Governing Board Monitoring Report](#) that is posted online for public viewing. The Governing Board uses these metrics to evaluate the overall financial health of the District. The metrics will be further referenced in Criterion 5.C.1.

The Governing Board conducts regular monthly meetings which are open to the public and allow for participation and submission of agenda items by both internal and external constituencies. A procedural notice of agenda review is published a week in advance. Board meetings allow for reporting by internal constituency groups including college administration, faculty senate, employee senate, adjunct faculty senate, student life, etc. A citizen's interim allows members of the community to address the board on topics of importance to them. Detailed [agendas](#) are published to ensure transparency. [Minutes of Governing Board meetings](#) prior to 2018 are available from the board website. As of January 2018, hard copies are kept in the MCCCDC Legal Library, and may be requested from the Board Office.

4.

As elected officials, members of the MCCCDC Governing Board may speak individually, but the board is expected to act as a body for the enhancement and in the best interests of the institution. Per its [Manner of Governing](#), the board undertakes to govern in a lawful, nonpartisan manner.

The professional and ethical department expected is clearly specified in the [Board Members Code of Conduct](#). Furthermore, board members are required to adhere to all regulations defining restrictions regarding [gifts, gratuities, and unrelated compensation](#).

5.

Administration

[The Chancellor](#), who serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the District, is the single employee who reports directly to the Governing Board. The Governing Board's [Delegation to the Chancellor](#) provides direction that allows for the Chancellor's own reasonable interpretation of policy. As referenced above, the Administrative Regulations are rules adopted by the Chancellor for day-to-day management of District operations. Per the [Accountability of the Chancellor](#), the Chancellor is responsible for all authority and accountability of employees, and delegates implementation of the administrative regulations to appropriate personnel, such as vice-chancellors, college presidents, etc.

The RSC President sits on the Chancellor's Executive Council (CEC), the body providing leadership for the operational activities of the District Office and the 10 MCCCDC colleges. The President and college administrators oversee the day-to-day management of college-related activities concerning students, faculty, and staff. The RSC shared governance model is described in Criterion 5.A.1.

MCCCDC Faculty

In February 2018, the Governing Board passed a resolution that immediately eliminated Meet and Confer, the shared governance process whereby the Residential Faculty Policies (RFP) had been developed for the prior 40 years, and terminated the then-current RFP effective no later than October 31, 2018. These actions were the catalyst for the complaint to the HLC that was detailed in Criterion 2.C.1. The Governing Board implemented the [Faculty Administration Collaboration Team](#) (FACT) in FY2019-20. This action reinstated the Faculty Association as the official representative body for the MCCCDC Residential Faculty and recognized the Adjunct Faculty Association's role in shared governance. The FACT team was tasked with reviewing residential and adjunct faculty agreements and practices. The Governing Board also consulted with Collaborative Brain Trust (CBT) consultants to identify issues and provide support to reestablish effective forms of staff organization for employee groups. As a result of these actions, the inaugural [Faculty Agreement](#) was approved by the Governing Board in February 2021, and became effective on July 1, 2021. The [preamble](#) speaks to the collaboration by numerous stakeholders and the [interest-based](#), consensus-driven approach that produced the agreement.

In alignment with the Faculty Agreement, the [RSC Residential Faculty Senate](#) functions as the primary faculty governance team, promoting success in teaching and learning, contributing to the creation and implementation of educational policies at the College, and serving on integral administrative committees. [Instructional Councils](#) (ICs), discipline-specific groups comprised of one voting faculty representative per college, are important bodies to ensure that residential faculty members have a leadership role in MCCCDC academic matters. The Instructional Councils provide oversight for the MCCCDC's common course bank and shared instructional programs. They also

oversee curriculum development and modifications, and play a role in activities such as university transfer and articulation agreements. More information on the faculty role in the curricular process will follow in Criterion 3.A.1.

Sources

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2.D - Core Component 2.D

The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

Argument

The rights of MCCCDC residential and adjunct faculty are delineated in [Section 3.1 – Academic Freedom](#) of the Faculty Agreement. In May 2020, in response to a controversy at another MCCCDC institution, the Interim Chancellor assigned the Provost to create a [Committee on Academic Freedom](#). An RSC faculty chair was invited by the Provost to serve as a founding member.

In accordance with these principles, the [Academic Freedom Philosophy Statement](#) of the RSC residential faculty places a high value on supporting academic freedom in the context of the college mission. The statement is posted on both the residential and adjunct faculty intranet sites.

RSC submits an annual [Free Expression Report](#) to the MCCCDC, which demonstrates alignment with District [policies and procedures for student assembly](#) and the principle of [free exchange of ideas](#).

The RSC Library provides a research guide for [Banned Books Week](#) that celebrates the free and open access to all information and emphasizes the harm of censorship. Also, the RSC Library's [Collection Development Policy and Procedures](#) document includes an Intellectual Freedom Statement that guides acquisition of materials addressing a broad spectrum of views.

Sources

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2.E - Core Component 2.E

The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Argument

1.

Institutional Review Board

Faculty, staff, students, and external investigators conducting research at RSC must conform with the [MCCCD Institutional Review Board \(IRB\) Policy](#), which ensures compliance with federal guidelines for human subjects research. Also, each of the 10 MCCCD institutions has a College Research Review Committee (CRRC) to evaluate proposals that do not require full IRB review. The chair of each CRRC serves on the MCCCD Institutional Review Board, which typically meets 2-3 times in the fall and spring semesters. Per the [MCCCD IRB Handbook](#), all research conducted at RSC must receive institutional approval from the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) prior to submission to the CRRC and/or IRB. Policies and procedures are available on the [Institutional Review Board Website](#).

Academic Research and Presentations

RSC students and faculty share their research in a variety of forums as evidenced by this [Research Examples](#) list.

Sabbaticals

MCCCD faculty can apply for a sabbatical every seven years. The criteria and process are addressed in [Section 12.8 Sabbatical Leave](#) of the Faculty Agreement.

Grants Management Office

The RSC Grants Management Office provides fiscal accountability for [grant-funded projects](#) that include a basic or applied research component and necessitate fiscal management, budgeting, compliance, and reporting requirements.

2.

Information Literacy

Because of RSC's large cohort of online students and the increased opportunities that the digital environment creates for abuse, the College has been particularly vigilant in establishing and promoting policies and mechanisms to ensure the ethical use of information by students. [Information Literacy](#) is a college-wide student learning outcome that is measured at the college-, program-, and course levels, and several interventions are in place in online courses across all disciplines, including a [Library Services](#) section in all online syllabi. Additionally, third-party materials are cited appropriately through a [Copyright Acknowledgement](#) section. The Library Instructional Coordinator works with online course developers to identify appropriate third-party content for courses, including library subscription materials (articles, eBooks, and media) as well as open educational resources (OER) that have Creative Commons licensing, so that ethically-sourced educational materials are provided and modeled for students.

Data and Assessment Summer Camp

The RSC Institutional Research Office, in partnership with Civitas Learning, presented an eight-part virtual "data camp" in summer, 2021. Employees who attended all sessions received a "Rio Data Badge" certification, and the [series was recorded](#) and made available for further viewing via the RSC YouTube channel. This program highlighted to employees the ethics of responsible use of data when conducting or publishing research, in addition to honing their familiarity and competence in the use of many of RSC's data-driven systems in the performance of their jobs.

3.

Course Syllabus Information

As described in Criterion 2.B.1, all RSC syllabi contain information and expectations regarding avoidance of academic misconduct.

Library Guidance

The RSC Library provides extensive guidance to students on the ethical use of information via online resources such as citation guides, video tutorials, and discipline-specific research guides which are linked extensively in courses at students' point-of-need and are also available via the library website. Usage data illustrates robust student engagement with these resources. In FY2020-21, the [APA Citation Style guide](#) had [38,853 views](#), along with [17,523 views](#) for the [MLA Citation Style guide](#). A [Plagiarism Basics tutorial](#), which launched in February 2021, had more than [800 views](#) by the end of FY2020-21.

RSC instructors can also request in-person and/or virtual library instruction sessions taught by Library Faculty, which cover discipline-specific research methodology and ethical information practices. In addition, Library Faculty created [RIO100-INTEG](#), an Academic Integrity course offered at no cost to students, which provides training on all aspects of ethical information within the academic setting and is included among the academic misconduct interventions linked in 2.E.4 below.

4.

Academic Integrity

An RSC [Academic Ethics and Integrity](#) public web page includes a statement of values and

associated practices, along with tips to help students maintain integrity in their online coursework. Students who violate these policies are subject to MCCCDC Administrative Regulation (AR) 2.3.11 [Academic Misconduct Policy](#). In accordance with AR 2.3.11, an [Academic Misconduct](#) section is included in all syllabi. RSC's Office of Academic Integrity (OAI) systematically reviews the assessment database to identify potential issues related to students submitting assignments from identical IP addresses, matching file properties, and other factors that could indicate a violation of academic integrity standards. A proprietary [Peer-to-Peer Plagiarism Detection System](#) scans student assignment submissions across online course sections and terms, and RSC also subscribes to the Turnitin e-plagiarism detector, which scans student work against a database of previously-published electronic documents. The Faculty Chair, after investigation of flagged infractions, proceeds through a series of progressive [interventions](#) that support an educational (rather than punitive) approach to remediating confirmed incidents. The OAI is responsible for maintaining academic misconduct records electronically in CRM, and alerts the discipline Faculty Chair when a student has a history of violations across courses and/or disciplines. The chair may then convene the [Academic Integrity Council](#), an ad-hoc committee that includes the faculty senate president, the Faculty Chairs of affected disciplines, and the Associate Dean of Community Standards (ADCS). The ADCS, serving as the designee for the Vice President of Academic Affairs, coordinates the adjudication for disciplinary sanctions, including probation, suspension, or expulsion, via the [Administrative Regulations 2.5.2](#) procedures. Students may appeal academic consequences by following the Instructional Grievance Process referenced in Criterion 2.A.2.

In addition to academic misconduct, [Civility](#) expectations are included in every course syllabus and are enforced by faculty members via the Academic Misconduct Policy noted above.

International Contract Cheating Day

RSC participates in [International Contract Cheating Day](#) as a mechanism to heighten student awareness of the importance of submitting original academic work. Students and staff participate in [Take a Selfie Stand Against Cheating](#) by posting to social media.

Centralized Copyright Processes

RSC has a centralized Copyright Department housed within the library, whose functions are to provide assistance and guidance during the instructional design and course production processes for use of third-party content provided in online courses; secure copyright and/or licensing permission where indicated; and track permissioned items by course in an internal copyright database. This process eliminates the need for individual course developers to secure permissions for copyrighted content, while simultaneously ensuring appropriate use of third-party intellectual property. RSC librarians assist with discovery of Open Educational Resources (OER) in support of the initiative described in Criterion 2.B.2. The library also provides tailored copyright education resources, such as [Image Copyright and Ethical Use](#) and [Audio & Video Copyright and Ethical Use](#) in the Computer Technology (BPC/CIS) Research Guide, and the [Copyright Basics for Fiction Writers](#) guide for the Creative Writing Department. Additionally, the MCCCDC maintains extensive copyright information and educational resources for employees and students on the [Intellectual Property](#) pages of its Legal Services website.

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- RSC_Grant Awards_2.E.1
- RSC_Image Copyright and Ethical Use_2.E.4
- RSC_Information Literacy_2.E.2
- RSC_MLA Citation Style Guide_2.E.3
- RSC_MLA Style Guide Views_2.E.3
- RSC_Peer to Peer Plagiarism Detection System_2.E.4
- RSC_Plagiarism Basics Tutorial Analytics_2.E.3
- RSC_Plagiarism Basics Tutorial_2.E.3
- RSC_RIO100-INTEG_2.E.3
- RSC_Syllabi_Academic Misconduct_2.E.2
- RSC_Syllabi_Civility Policy_2.E.2
- RSC_Syllabi_Copyright Acknowledgement_2.E.2.pdf
- RSC_Syllabi_Library Services_2.E.2
- RSC_Take a Selfie Stand Against Cheating_2.E.4

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Summary

- District-, college-, and individual accountability have been established through adherence to a code of conduct; expectations for professional and personal ethics; and mandatory training that ensures compliance with state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.
- Well-defined rights and responsibilities are codified in manuals for each employee group.
- RSC has clear and comprehensive policies and procedures governing student complaints and institutional responsiveness.
- Institutional transparency is achieved through continual monitoring and regular reporting to the MCCCCD Governing Board and the community.
- RSC maintains an Office of Institutional Integrity & Compliance to ensure compliance with the regulatory triad of federal regulations, state regulations, and accreditation/third party requirements.
- Well-developed and systematic academic integrity policies and practices are in place for modeling, promoting, and guiding ethical student conduct.
- An annual website audit in conformance with a published *Website Statement of Governance* ensures currency and accuracy of RSC public website information.
- RSC is a founding member of the College Innovation Network and involved in conducting primary research into best practices for serving traditionally-underrepresented and marginalized student populations.

Sources

There are no sources.

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

Argument

1.

MCCCD Curriculum Process

As previously described, Rio Salado College (RSC) is one of 10 colleges in the Maricopa County Community College District (MCCCD). Each college is individually accredited; however, the 10 colleges share a common course bank and follow a district-wide curriculum approval process, as defined in the [Curriculum Procedures Handbook](#). The [Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation](#) (CCTA) supports the MCCCD faculty and administration in the development of quality curriculum for district students, as well as the articulation of the curriculum to post-secondary institutions. RSC has a designated Faculty Chair who leads processes for the development, coordination, and review of the College's curriculum, and serves on the [District Curriculum Committee](#) (DCC), in the role of Curriculum Design Facilitator (CDF), contributing the RSC faculty perspective to MCCCD curricular priorities.

Instructional Councils

As mentioned in Criterion 2.C.5, [Instructional Councils](#) are district-wide, discipline-specific committees comprising faculty representatives from each of the 10 MCCCD colleges that oversee the District's common course bank and shared programs, and are responsible for evaluating the quality and content-appropriateness of academic curricula. RSC has a residential faculty representative on most of these councils, who often serve as chairs of their respective councils.

Guided Pathways

In 2018, the District undertook a massive [transformation](#) process to increase consistency across colleges at the program- and course level, adopting a [Guided Pathways model](#). This evidence-based, comprehensive approach is designed to help students identify their educational and career goals,

determine their needs, and then chart a clear, coherent pathway to timely goal completion. They begin by taking courses shared among broadly-related areas of study, allowing for early career exploration, contextualized learning, comprehensive student support services, and meaningful connections. The Guided Pathways development process began with Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) that were articulated by the MCCCDC and developed by the Instructional Councils. PLOs are based upon Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) descriptors, and articulated using Bloom's Taxonomy to signal the expected level of student performance for the credential awarded, thus establishing consistency and quality in academic standards for the entire District.

Faculty members from across the district engaged in cross-disciplinary dialogues to enrich and sustain the Guided Pathways process, with foundational faculty providing support and insight into the development of quality curriculum for transfer pathways. Between FY2019 and FY2021, over [240 programs](#) (as defined by the [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) codes](#)) were [mapped](#) to align specific content knowledge and general education learning outcomes, assuring that the programs being offered were up to date, relevant to student goals, and responsive to current industry and transfer partner requirements, clearly communicating to the public the requirements and expectations for all courses and programs at MCCCDC and RSC.

Programs and certificates are organized into nine [Fields of Interest](#) (FOI) that share similar areas of study, intended to facilitate the identification of learning/career areas of interest for students through use of behavioral economics.

All transfer courses are reviewed by Arizona's three state universities to determine potential alignment, providing another measure of rigor for courses developed by RSC and MCCCDC faculty. Guided Pathways metrics and data are referenced in Criterion 4.C.3.

RSC Curriculum Process

The [RSC Curriculum Committee](#) receives monthly updates from the Curriculum Department, which prepares a list of all new and modified internal [curriculum proposals](#) for consideration. Membership comprises six Faculty Chairs (one of whom serves as the Curriculum Design Facilitator, or CDF), as well as College Vice Presidents and Deans. Courses from the MCCCDC course bank that are developed at RSC are reviewed by the discipline Faculty Chair or designee to assure that all official course competencies have been included. Lesson outcomes are developed and [aligned with official course competencies](#), and assessed at the appropriate level.

The CDF also reviews all new and modified curriculum proposals from other MCCCDC colleges, consulting with the RSC discipline-specific faculty chair when questions arise.

The relevancy and appropriateness of RSC's curriculum is best exemplified by the programs preparing students for state licensure. Admissions requirements for each of these programs is specified in the official program description at the district level, and licensure disclosures demonstrating the applicability of the programs are disclosed on the RSC website for each program: [Addictions and Substance Use Disorder Programs](#); [Teacher Preparation Programs](#); and [Dental Hygiene](#).

Additionally, the Curriculum Department works closely with the Institutional Integrity Department and other stakeholders on compliance and regulations in [new and revised program development](#), as described in Criterion 2.A.2.

2.

As indicated above, program learning outcomes are based upon SOC and CIP descriptors. For example, program descriptions for the [Early Childhood Education AAS](#) in comparison to the [Early Childhood Education CCL](#) demonstrate how learning outcomes of certificates are simultaneously connected to and distinguished from corresponding associates degrees, and tailored to the credential awarded. Courses in the [Early Childhood Education Post Baccalaureate Program](#) are designed for individuals who have a bachelor's degree or higher (in any area) from an accredited university who wish to obtain certification as an early childhood teacher.

3.

"One Course, Many Sections" and 40+ Weekly Start Dates

To provide context around the question of consistency, it is important to understand RSC's "one course, many sections" curricular model for online, hybrid, print-based, and correspondence classes. There is a centrally-developed, single version of a given course, with all of the content and assessments included. Individual instructors have the freedom to enhance the lessons with additional information and resources, but the core content remains intact. Courses are developed and written by the department Faculty Chair or a designated content expert, often an experienced adjunct faculty member who is a practitioner in the field, working with the [Instructional Design Department](#). That content is then published by the Course Production (CP) Department and serves as the curriculum for any instructor who teaches that course. Print courses differ from online courses only in that copyright-cleared printed copies of all readings are provided to students, in lieu of being linked in the online version of the course. CP produces the printed course packets for all correspondence courses.

Students may enroll to begin most of RSC's online courses on 40+ Mondays per year. The College has a well-developed infrastructure for maintaining this model, including a [block calendar](#) system for degree- or certificate program seekers.

RSC's centralized model presents many advantages to the College, instructors, and students:

- Course materials are consistent in look, feel, and navigation.
- Courses follow established quality standards for instructional alignment and assessment.
- Course materials are reviewed in accordance with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#).
- Copyright clearance for third-party course materials is managed by the RSC Library.
- Instructors have more time to focus on engaging with individual students and providing substantive feedback on assignments.

While curricular consistency is assured by having identical outcomes and assessments in online and hybrid courses, in other modalities this consistency is assured by requiring that identical course competencies are assessed for each specific course, regardless of the modality. For example, whether students are taking [ENG101 online](#) or via [dual enrollment](#), they will be assessed according to the same learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes in ESP courses ([Educational Service Partnerships](#)--see Criterion 1.B.3) are also assessed at the appropriate level, regardless of the location or mode of delivery, as evidenced by the identical competencies in the [ESP](#) and [hybrid](#) versions of LET155.

Furthermore, [adjunct faculty expectations](#) relative to class preparation, facilitation, communication,

and assessment for all modalities are clearly articulated and enforced.

An additional benefit of the one course, many sections model is that student performance data can be collected more easily, because assessments are uniform among sections of a course. As a result, interventions can readily be implemented in course content, assessments, or teaching strategies that affect a large number of students simultaneously. The Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD), enabling assessment of college-wide student learning outcomes across over a million assessments in thousands of online courses, will be described in Criterion 4.B.3.

Sources

- MCCCCD_Center for Curriculum and Transfer Articulation_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Course Competencies_HCR220_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Curriculum Procedures Handbook_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_DCC Meeting Agenda_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Fields of Interest_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Guided Pathways_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Instructional Councils_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Pathway Mapping Dashboard_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Pathway Mapping FAQs_CIP Codes_3.A.1
- MCCCCD_Sample Outcomes_Early Childhood AAS_3.A.2
- MCCCCD_Sample Outcomes_Early Childhood CCL_3.A.2
- MCCCCD_Transformation_Guided Pathways_3.A.1
- RSC_Adjunct Faculty Standards_3.A.3
- RSC_Block Calendar_3.A.3
- RSC_Curriculum Committee Agenda_Proposed Curriculum_3.A.1
- RSC_Curriculum Committee_3.A.1
- RSC_Early Childhood Education Post Baccalaureate Program_3.A.2
- RSC_Educational Service Partnerships_3.A.3
- RSC_Instructional Design_3.A.3
- RSC_LET155 ESP Syllabus_3.A.3
- RSC_LET155 Hybrid Syllabus_3.A.3
- RSC_Licensure_Addictions and Substance Use Disorders Programs_3.A.1
- RSC_Licensure_Dental Hygiene_3.A.1
- RSC_Licensure_Teacher Preparation Programs_3.A.1
- RSC_Mapping Example_ABUS GR_3.A.1
- RSC_Program Development Flowchart_3.A.1
- RSC_Syllabus_ENG101_DualEnrollment_3.A.3
- RSC_Syllabus_ENG101_Online_3.A.3
- W3C_Web Accessibility Guidelines_3.A.3

3.B - Core Component 3.B

The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.
2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.
4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

Argument

1.

The MCCCDC has established [curriculum and transfer articulation](#) as the key factors in development of general education programs in the District. As indicated in Criterion 3.A.1, the District's CCTA manages these areas. The MCCCDC general education program is contained in the [Arizona General Education Curriculum](#) (AGEC), a set of 35-37 credits that satisfy general education requirements at Arizona State University (ASU), Northern Arizona University (NAU), and the University of Arizona (UA) through statewide articulation agreements, with three different concentration options available to students. These articulation agreements allow students to identify a program of study early and take courses at RSC for the first two years and then transfer to a state university to complete a four-year degree. The general studies designations are aligned with ASU's model and governed by the [ASU General Studies Council](#), and include Literacy and Critical Inquiry (L); Mathematical Studies (MA, CS); Humanities and Fine Arts (HU); Social and Behavioral Sciences (SB); Natural Sciences (SQ, SG); Global Awareness (G); Historical Awareness (H) and Cultural Diversity in the United States (C). The inclusiveness of these designations support RSC's DEIB values in its general education program, which comprises numerous courses under various disciplines, including Art, Biology, Chemistry, Communication, Computers, English, Geology, History, Humanities, Languages, Math, and Social Sciences. RSC provides these courses through multiple modalities including online, hybrid, face-to-face, print, dual enrollment, and partnership programs. The general education chairs collaborate on a formal [General Education Program Review](#) conducted approximately every five years, which includes detailed analysis of general education student learning outcomes. The program review process will be covered in Criterion 4.A.1.

2.

The framework of [General Education at MCCCDC](#) includes specific elements across the curriculum

designed to foster [personal development and essential knowledge and skills](#). The MCCCDC and RSC general education requirements contribute to student success in the following areas: transfer to a baccalaureate program; associate degree recognition and/or specialization certification as affirmation of proficiency in a particular content and/or skill area; application of these skills for employment and job advancement; and development of critical and evaluative reading, composition, research, and critical thinking skills (e.g., analysis, evaluation, inference).

To facilitate the achievement of these characteristics, RSC has selected [five student learning outcomes](#) as the focus of college-wide student learning assessment work. These student learning outcomes are assessed at the college-, program-, and course levels and will be described in detail in Criterion 4.B.1.

In addition to meeting the college-wide learning outcomes on critical thinking and information literacy, every degree program at RSC requires students to demonstrate the ability to apply critical inquiry skills to varied and challenging materials, as demonstrated by [these examples](#).

Also, students must achieve a district-approved score on the reading portion of a nationally-normed standardized assessment, or they must earn a passing grade in CRE101 (College Critical Reading).

3.

As described in Criterion 1.C.3, RSC has identified diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging as core values, which align with the MCCCDC [vision](#) to work “collectively and responsibly to meet the life-long learning needs of our diverse students and communities.” The wide array of educational programs and opportunities for students that recognize human and cultural diversity, including Adult ACE, adult education, veterans, incarcerated populations, RISE, etc., along with student programs and organizations supporting diverse student groups, were also described in Criterion One. In FY2020-21, the DEIB Council sponsored a series of [Equity Action Sessions and Forums](#) geared towards students and employees, as detailed in Criterion 1.C.3. In addition to college- and district-wide initiatives, RSC offers an array of [credit-bearing courses that focus on human and cultural diversity](#).

4.

College Contributions to Scholarship

As described in Criterion 2.B.2, RSC contributes to scholarship through research efforts including RioPACE, predictive analytics, and the CIN EdTech Study. Scholarship in the area of assessment includes recognition as an Excellence in Assessment designee by NILOA, a WCET WOW award, and a Tyton Partners case study (see Criterion 4.B.3), which highlight RSC's use of purposeful data analysis in improving student learning outcomes.

Faculty Contributions to Scholarship

As a two-year college, RSC does not directly engage in scholarship as one of its primary functions; however, RSC residential faculty are instructional leaders who remain current in their fields by participating actively in professional organizations, pursuing regular professional growth opportunities, [academic publishing, and presenting at conferences](#).

RioLogs (Rio Learning Outcomes Grants)

RioLogs are internal RSC grants awarded to adjunct faculty members for student learning outcomes work. Examples will be provided in Criterion 4.B.3.

Student Contributions to Scholarship

- **Honors Program**

The [Honors Program](#) provides intellectually-stimulating learning opportunities for academically outstanding students. The program includes scholarships, distinguished multidisciplinary classes, project-based learning, the Honors Forum Lecture Series, and community cultural events. Recipients of the Presidents' Honors Scholarship and Honors Achievement Award are required to complete [co-curricular activities](#) designed to enrich and enhance the educational experience. Students report on these activities in the non-credit HONORS100, which includes a writing component. Students must earn a minimum writing score of 70% in order to be considered "college-level," as determined by a standardized grading rubric. Of the 358 co-curricular assessments submitted by scholarship-eligible Honors students during AY2020-21, 90.0% were written at or above college level, far exceeding the RSC target to have 80% of students producing college-level writing. The [Honors Achievement Award Graph](#) shows the award totals for Fall 2017 through Spring 2020.

- **All Arizona-Academic Scholars**

The MCCCDC colleges annually recognize students for outstanding academic achievement, community service, and leadership that benefit society beyond the classroom. Most recently, [RSC honored two student scholars](#) at the [All-Arizona Academic Team](#) celebration in March, 2021.

Sources

- ASU_General Studies Council_3.B.1
- AZ Board of Regents_All Arizona Academic Team_3.B.4
- AZTransfer_Arizona General Education Curriculum_3.B.1
- MCCCDC_AGEC_3.B.2
- MCCCDC_CCTA_General Studies_3.B.1
- MCCCDC_General Education_Personal Development Knowledge and Skills_3.B.2
- MCCCDC_Vision_3.B.3
- RSC_Credit Bearing Courses_Diversity_3.B.3
- RSC_DEIB Equity Action Sessions_3.B.3
- RSC_Examples of Application of Critical Inquiry Skills_3.B.2
- RSC_Faculty Publications and Presentations_3.B.4
- RSC_General Education Program Review_3.B.1
- RSC_Honors Achievement Award Graph_3.B.4
- RSC_Honors CoCurricular Activities_3.B.4
- RSC_Honors Program_3.B.4
- RSC_Honors Student Scholars_3.B.4
- RSC_Student Learning Outcomes_3.B.2

3.C - Core Component 3.C

The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.
3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

Argument

1.

As indicated in Criterion 1.C.3, RSC is deeply invested in the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), and within that context, strives to hire and maintain a diverse workforce by following [MCCCD's Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) policies](#). RSC and the District Office publicly advertise vacancies through wide-ranging sites to seek highly-qualified candidates, and have increased diversity within hiring pools by advertising in various sources that include targeted groups. These include [higherjobs.com](#), [diversityjobs](#), [blackcareers.org](#), [veteranjobs.net](#), [disabilityjobs.net](#), [asianhires.com](#), [wehirewomen.com](#), [latinojobs](#), [nativejobs](#), etc. RSC also advertises with [West Valley View](#), [Handshake](#), [Zip Recruiter](#), [Indeed](#) and others as appropriate when requested.

RSC forms its hiring committees by considering subject matter expertise and ensuring inclusion of ethnic and gender diversity. The hiring process is detailed in Criterion 5.B.1.

Based on [FY2020-21 demographic data](#), RSC faculty and staff closely reflect the student population they serve in terms of gender. However, in terms of race/ethnicity, Hispanic/Latino faculty and staff tend to be underrepresented when compared to the overall student body. It should be noted that a significant portion of faculty race/ethnicity data was unreported or unknown, which may impact the overall distribution.

2.

RSC Residential Faculty Chair Model

Since RSC's founding in 1978, the College has maintained a nontraditional faculty structure. There is generally one full-time residential faculty member per academic department who also serves as the [Faculty Chair](#) (with multiple disciplines combined under one chair in some cases). The chair model is based on maintaining a compact, flexible, and innovative leadership group of discipline experts (numbering 24 in fall 2021) who manage their programs, curriculum, student learning assessment, projects, initiatives, and services while supervising a large contingent of adjunct faculty (1,246 in FY2020-21). Since many of the faculty chairs' responsibilities differ from roles at traditional campuses, RSC has a significant support model (see below) to assist with operational responsibilities, allowing the Chairs to focus their efforts on department-, college-, district-, and often state- and national-level leadership in their areas of expertise, as well as devoting their time to interdisciplinary work and participating in a wide range of RSC strategic activities.

It should be noted that the Higher Learning Commission has accepted the RSC residential faculty model. In a letter dated June 28, 2021, [the Commission stated](#): "*Based on the information you provided to HLC in your 2021 Institutional Update, your institution triggered indicator 4-Minimal Full-Time Faculty, which requires the institution submit information for staff review... Since your institution has provided acceptable information in a previous report about indicator 4-Minimal Full-Time Faculty, no institutional report is required at this time.*"

Faculty Chairs represent the College through service on district-wide Instructional Councils and Articulation Task Forces, serving as academic leaders to ensure the currency, quality, and rigor of the common district curriculum, and are responsible for developing their courses at RSC or designating subject matter experts as course developers. Faculty leadership positions are held by elected individuals who serve as liaisons between the residential faculty and other college entities, as well as serving on the [MCCCD Faculty Executive Council](#).

Faculty Instructional Team

In order to maintain the small cohort of residential faculty while meeting enrollment needs and continued delivery of high-quality instruction, a sustainable and scalable Faculty Instructional Team support model is in place. The unbundling of faculty chair responsibilities allows for the hiring of tiered positions including full-time [Instructional Director](#) or [Instructional Coordinator](#), part-time Discipline Specialist or Lead Adjunct Faculty, as appropriate to the department. Faculty instructional support personnel are often experienced, fully-credentialed adjunct faculty members prior to being selected through a competitive hiring process, and assist the chair with such matters as refinement of department policies and procedures, overseeing the tracking of instructional issues, evaluation of adjunct faculty, and coordination of assessment efforts, among others.

Adjunct Faculty

Dedicated adjunct faculty members are critical to the success of RSC's nontraditional model, allowing for more flexibility in staffing classes, including online classes with 40+ annual start dates. Extensive processes are in place to evaluate and to support adjunct faculty, as evidenced below in Criteria 3.C.4 and 3.C.5, while the "one course, many sections" online content model ensures consistency in course design and delivery, enabling adjunct faculty to enhance online course lessons with additional information and resources.

Curriculum Development Processes and Oversight

As detailed in Criterion 3.A.1, the MCCCD colleges share a common course bank and follow a

district-wide curriculum design approval process defined in the [Curriculum Procedures Handbook](#), with the RSC faculty responsible for the college curriculum development process.

Faculty-Driven Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

RSC's collaborative student learning outcomes assessment processes are faculty-driven and are described in detail in Criterion 4.B.

3.

MCCCD faculty credential requirements conform with the HLC minimum required faculty qualifications. Detailed specifications, as approved by the relevant Discipline Faculty Instructional Council for each teaching field, are listed on the [MCCCD HLC Minimum Qualifications for Hiring website](#).

- **Academic Teaching Fields:**
 - A master's degree in the teaching field, or
 - A master's in any teaching field with 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching field
 - Equivalent education and experience as determined by the relevant Discipline Faculty Instructional Council.

- **Occupational Teaching Fields: minor variations to the example below, as approved by the relevant Discipline Faculty Instruction Council.**
Example: approved by the Business Faculty Instructional Council
 - The same qualifications as those listed for Academic Teaching Fields, or
 - A bachelor's degree in a business field, or
 - A bachelor's degree plus 3 years work experience* in the field to be taught, or
 - An associate's degree or 64 semester hours and 5 years work experience* in the field to be taught, or 5 years work experience* in the field to be taught.

**Business experience will be evaluated at the discretion of the Department or Division Chair. Disagreement between the Chair and the Administration regarding experience will be presented to the Business IC for review.*

Residential Faculty

RSC residential faculty, who must meet the minimum qualifications upon hire, are initially employed in a probationary status and attain appointive status at the beginning of their sixth consecutive year. The required Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process for the probationary period is described below in Criterion 3.C.4. The District does not use academic rank for faculty members. The official files of RSC's residential faculty (who serve as Faculty Chairs) are housed at the District Office.

Adjunct Faculty and Dual Enrollment Instructors

All RSC adjunct faculty and dual enrollment instructors are required by the MCCCD to meet the same degree-credentialing requirements as residential faculty upon hire, in alignment with the HLC minimum qualifications and HLC Assumed Practice B.2. RSC ensures that new adjunct faculty meet requirements through its centralized [Faculty Services department](#), which is responsible for receiving applications, pre-screening, and verifying teaching credentials (education and required years of experience) before submitting the application to the appropriate departmental faculty chair who then

reviews qualifications, conducts interviews, and makes the hiring determination.

Educational Service Partnerships (ESP) Instructors

RSC's Educational Service Partnership (ESP) instructors (numbering 145 in AY2020-21) must meet [prescribed minimum qualifications](#) that are consistent and aligned with the HLC required faculty qualifications.

EDU 250: Teaching and Learning in the Community College, or Equivalent

In addition to meeting minimum qualifications, all adjunct faculty must complete the mandatory [EDU250](#) (Teaching and Learning in the Community College) or its equivalent within two years of initial hire. The EDU250 curriculum covers the history, functions, organization, current issues, and effective teaching strategies in the community college, with particular focus on Arizona and the MCCCDC. ESP instructors complete AFD250b, which is an EDU250-equivalent course [tailored to their specific needs](#).

Adjunct Faculty Support Systems

In addition to facilitating the hiring process as described above, the Faculty Services department maintains a proprietary [Faculty Information System \(FIS\) database](#) containing detailed files for all adjunct faculty, dual enrollment instructors, and ESP instructors. FIS includes resumes; transcripts; credentials; professional and/or industry licenses and certifications; formal evaluations; tracking of EDU 250/AFD250b completion; and monitoring of ongoing required professional development workshops (see Criterion 3.C.5). Faculty Services personnel and Faculty Chairs update and manage information in FIS, which is easily searchable. The Institutional Research department is able to create customized reports from the system as needed.

The Instructional Helpdesk (IHD), which assists the faculty chairs as needed in the mentoring, training, and evaluation of adjunct faculty, will be described in Criterion 3.D.1. Additionally, RSC has a dedicated infrastructure in place to serve the needs of instructors and students in its various locations, including a dual enrollment office, an Educator Preparation Program department, an incarcerated re-entry office, and an ESP department, all of which are fully-staffed. A course support team provides a number of behind-the-scenes functions that assist adjunct faculty and facilitate the smooth operation of RSC's 40+ annual course starts, such as monitoring live enrollment data and opening new sections as required, scheduling class sections for all instructional disciplines, and calculating worksheets for the adjunct faculty payroll process.

4.

Residential Faculty Evaluation

- **Peer Assistance and Review (PAR)**

Residential faculty hired into the MCCCDC system are considered probationary for their first five years of employment, and are required to participate in the PAR (Peer Assistance and Review) process during those years, in accordance with [Article 17](#) of the Faculty Agreement. As outlined in the [RSC PAR handbook](#), the primary purpose of PAR is to encourage, support and mentor probationary faculty members while building an archive for achievement and performance. The information gathered during the PAR process is used as one tool in the decision-making process for renewal of a probationary faculty member. During PAR, probationary faculty document their

instructional expertise, service to the College and community, and professional development through an [Individual Development Plan](#) (IDP) each year. Peer Mentors are required to undergo specific training and to meet frequently with their mentees in a designated process that includes mentoring activities and oversight. A Peer Assistance and Review Committee (PARC), consisting of the Vice President of Academic Affairs and qualified appointive faculty, evaluates IDPs each year and makes recommendations to the RSC President regarding renewal of the probationary appointment, and appointive status at the end of the fifth year. PAR evaluations are maintained at the College, with recommendations forming part of the faculty member's official personnel file at the District office.

- **Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP)**

In addition to PAR and the IDP process, RSC's residential faculty are evaluated according to the Faculty Evaluation Plan (FEP), a self-examination process outlined in [Article 18 of the Faculty Agreement](#). Residential faculty are required to complete an FEP annually for the first five years of employment as they progress through the PAR and IDP process, and every third year thereafter. FEP committee members are chosen from among faculty peers, college administration, or other discipline experts, while student input is sought in the teaching, learning, or service area. FEPs for all RSC residential faculty are up to date and maintained in the faculty files at the District Office.

Adjunct Faculty, Dual Enrollment Instructor, and ESP Instructor Evaluation

All adjunct faculty, including dual enrollment and ESP instructors, are evaluated in accordance with [Article 19 of the Faculty Agreement](#). At RSC, formal evaluation is conducted once each semester during the first three semesters of teaching in alignment with MCCCDCD policy, and continually thereafter in compliance with MCCCDCD policy and criteria established by the department Faculty Chair. Evaluations are conducted by the Chair, an Instructional Support designee, or Instructional Helpdesk personnel.

End-of-course surveys are administered to students to determine instructor efficacy (See Criterion 3.C.6 below). These data are analyzed and incorporated as a component of the Program Review process described in Criterion 4.A.1.

Evaluations for all adjunct faculty cohorts are retained in personnel files maintained by the Faculty Services Department.

5.

Residential Faculty Development

- **Faculty Professional Growth (FPG)**

MCCCDCD residential faculty are provided with professional growth funds and advancement opportunities as stated in [Article 13 of the Faculty Agreement](#). The District expended a total of \$115,498 in FPG funds for conference registration and travel by RSC's residential faculty members in fiscal years 2018-2020. In addition to MCCCDCD funds, RSC supports faculty attendance at conferences and workshops as needed if they have exhausted their district allowance and are representing the college or attending a conference of particular importance in their areas of specialization.

- **Maricopa Center for Learning and Instruction**

The [Maricopa Center for Learning and Innovation](#) (MCLI) is a district-wide office that provides leadership in the areas of teaching and learning, serves as a source for innovation resources, and provides ongoing professional development opportunities for residential and adjunct faculty. Among other signature events, MCLI holds the annual [Student Success Conference](#), the [Adjunct Faculty LEAD Conference](#), and the [Arizona Regional OER Conference](#). The MCLI is also the Arizona lead agency for *Quality Matters*TM, a peer review process whereby faculty assess and certify the quality of online courses. Seven current RSC Faculty Chairs have participated in *Quality Matters* training.

Adjunct Faculty Development: Continuing Education

As mentioned above, RSC's faculty model encompasses a large cohort of adjunct faculty members, and particular attention is paid to ensuring that adjunct faculty receive rigorous and ongoing professional growth and development opportunities. Adjunct faculty are required to attend at least two professional development opportunities per fiscal year. This requirement is reinforced in the AFD101 workshop (see below) and [tracked in the FIS database](#) detailed in Criterion 3.C.3. Faculty Chairs are able to easily identify adjuncts who have not met the requirement, and they can use these data when prioritizing class staffing.

- **All-Faculty Meetings**

Adjunct Faculty gain important teaching and learning knowledge by attending the All-Faculty Meetings (AFM) held each fall and spring semester. The [fall meeting](#) includes a general session, assessment updates, and TED Talk-style "RioChats" by adjunct faculty members, as well as department meetings. The spring event focuses primarily on department meetings for discussion of discipline-specific matters and connection with colleagues. All online and location-based adjunct faculty are invited to attend these biannual meetings which are well attended, averaging 560 in fall and 480 in spring for the past three fiscal years. [Exit survey data](#) attest to the value of these meetings to RSC adjunct faculty.

- **Adjunct Faculty Development (AFD) Workshops**

RSC's [AFD online workshops](#) are designed to provide comprehensive continuing education for adjunct faculty. Topic tracks include Online Teaching, Student Learning Outcomes, Online Course Development, Student Experience, Learning Theory, and Adult Learners. AFD 101 is mandated at hire, and additional workshops may be required by the Faculty Chair as an intervention to improve instructor effectiveness, or as a component of sequential instructor evaluations. Additionally, the workshops that are tied to the college-wide student learning outcomes may be required by some departments. All AFD workshops are presented in the RioLearn LMS, thereby providing adjunct faculty with an opportunity to experience the system from the student perspective before they begin teaching.

Over the past three fiscal years, almost 150 new adjunct faculty members successfully completed AFD101 and close to 750 additional workshops were completed from the selections available. The [2019 Adjunct Faculty Survey](#) (N=417) provided overwhelmingly positive data regarding perspectives on RSC's mission and culture, knowledge and understanding of policies and procedures, and effectiveness of communication strategies. However, the same survey had low numbers of adjunct faculty indicating they had taken optional AFD workshops. Faculty chairs continue to highlight these professional growth opportunities, and in some instances require completion of specific workshops to remediate areas for improvement identified during evaluations.

- **MCCCD Adjunct Faculty Professional Growth (AFPG) Program**

The [AFPG program](#) provides limited funding assistance on a reimbursement basis to adjunct faculty employees. In the past five years, RSC adjunct faculty have been awarded \$60,770.81 in MCCCD professional growth funds.

Dual Enrollment Instructor Orientation and Training

RSC Faculty Chairs/designees provide training and orientation for new dual enrollment instructors in college expectations, course-related matters, and using the RSC Syllabus Builder, an in-house, proprietary tool that guides dual enrollment instructors through the [creation of syllabi](#) that conform with RSC expectations. The software automatically populates required information such as MCCCD course competencies and reading lists, and Faculty Chairs use a dashboard to track the submitted syllabus from its initial creation, through modifications, to final approval. Instructors must provide evidence that the topics taught and assessed in their dual enrollment courses align with the course competencies approved in the MCCCD Course Bank.

An annual [Dual Enrollment Orientation](#) for new dual enrollment faculty is held each summer. In addition, most Faculty Chairs meet with their new instructors several times in the first year and at least once annually thereafter, also maintaining regular contact via email, telephone, and newsletters. Department-specific guidelines for dual enrollment instructors are made available via an internal portal, as evidenced by this [English Department](#) example.

6.

The RSC instructional support model was described in Criterion 3.C.2. This model, in conjunction with published [department-level expectations](#) requiring that adjunct faculty respond to student inquiries within designated timeframes (and which form part of adjunct faculty evaluation criteria), ensure that students are able to maintain regular and substantive two-way communication with their instructors. Thus, there are several layers of opportunity for all students to contact faculty regarding content, instructional support, or general inquiry questions, including the Instructional Helpdesk, which is an RSC-specific innovation (see Criterion 3.D.1 for details).

Students receive an [end-of-course survey](#) containing six core questions about instructor communication, feedback, and timeliness, along with two self-assessment questions. Over 34,500 evaluations were completed between January 2019 and early August 2021. All questions about instructor performance averaged higher than 4.50 on a 5-point scale each year, with data trending up from 2019 to 2020.

A gap analysis of the 2019 [Priorities Survey for Online Learners](#) (PSOL; n=316), a national-level survey aimed at measuring student perceptions and satisfaction with their institution, indicates improvement in student perception that “Faculty provide timely feedback on student progress.” In 2019, the gap between importance and satisfaction for this area was 0.43, demonstrating continuing improvement over a gap of 0.63 in 2016 and 0.72 in 2013.

7.

Hiring of Qualified Staff

RSC's student support services personnel are hired according to the criteria established by the MCCCD. The [MCCCD jobs website](#) lists the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for specific

positions, along with examples of the education and experience that would meet the skill set. Details of MCCCDC hiring processes will be provided in Criterion 5.B.1. Required qualifications for higher-level positions generally include a college degree along with commensurate experience in the field.

Student Affairs Employee Training

- **Internal Training**

The [Student Affairs Division](#) conducts regular in-service training for all departments under its purview. The Division has a Quality Assurance (QA) & Training Team that has created and implemented a system to provide pre-scheduled internal standardized training at prescribed intervals. Modules include Admissions, SIS101, Enrollment, Guided Pathways, among others. Additionally, the QA team provides customized and specialized group training upon request. Participant feedback is used to evolve the standardized content, identify trainer/training areas for improvement, and address any follow-up questions.

- **Third Party Training--Answernet Educational Services (AES)**

Since 2017, RSC has contracted with Answernet Educational Services (AES) to provide enhanced student lifecycle services (e.g., AR&R, Advising, Financial Aid Advising, etc.). A 2019 review of data demonstrated that in accordance with College expectations, AES maintained a less than 2% call abandonment rate, answered 90% of calls within 90 seconds, and resolved over 75% of calls for General Questions, AR&R, and Advisement. The rigorous [training process for AES representatives](#) is scaled up through three iterative tiers. During FY2020-21, the QA team provided over 100 modules or sessions (both internal and AES) equating to approximately 185 hours of training, in addition to customized pre-training sessions to meet specific needs and specialized requests.

- **Student Affairs Knowledge Base**

The QA Team created and maintains the Student Affairs [Knowledge Base](#) that is used college-wide. Ongoing updates and annual audits of the content ensure continued currency and accuracy. Content includes Quick Reference Guides, linked to relevant reference articles and materials, as well as process update articles that keep staff abreast of changes as needed. The Knowledge Base search engine also pulls results from the RSC public website, allowing staff to provide quick and accurate information to students.

Tutors

Tutors are subject-matter experts, of whom over 90% have a master's degree in their subject areas. Approximately 70% of current tutors are drawn from the ranks of the RSC's credentialed adjunct faculty, ensuring excellent content knowledge and consistency with the curriculum. The tutors are trained in adult learning and tutoring techniques that promote independent learning.

Adult Education Staff Training

The Adult Education program allocates a minimum of 10% of its annual grant funding to job-embedded professional learning for instructors and staff, and ADE, the grant sponsor, approves the program's [professional learning plan](#) and offers state-wide professional learning initiatives to guide grant-funded program implementation standards. Additionally, RSC Adult Education staff attend a wide variety of [conferences and training events](#).

Advisement Training

In addition to the Student Affairs training opportunities described above, new advisors undergo a specialized onboarding for approximately one month, followed by weekly staff meetings, in-service workshops and training, and professional conferences to ensure ongoing currency, and consult documentation specific to RSC Guided Pathways in the Student Affairs Knowledge Base. Lead Advisors work closely with faculty to develop expertise and resources specific to the programs in their designated advisement Field of Interest.

Financial Aid (FA) Advisement Training

New Financial Aid staff undergo a rigorous three-month training plan at the onset of employment. Components include the customer service skills, knowledge, and professionalism required to appropriately counsel students as needed on Title IV aid, and policies and procedures in other areas that have a direct impact on financial aid. FA Staff also participate in ongoing cross-departmental and district training as needed. Additionally, the FA staff attend in-person and virtual webinars for state, regional, and national FA conferences.

Military/Veterans Staff Training

Key staff at [Arizona Veteran Supportive Campus \(AVSC\) institutions](#) are required to take [Military Cultural Awareness training](#) as part of the bi-annual recertification process, in accordance with [Arizona Revised Statute 41-609](#).

Co-curricular Advisement Training

RSC's Honors program is under the purview of a residential Faculty Chair who serves as the Honors Coordinator, and a full-time Honors Assistant who has expertise and remains current with the [MCCCD Honors Program](#) requirements. The [RSC PTK chapter](#) is under the purview of a long-term Coordinator of Student Life & Leadership and a Faculty Chair advisor. An additional full-time advisor has a doctorate in educational leadership.

MCCCD Student Success Conference

The MCCCD holds an annual Student Success Conference primarily geared towards an audience of student services personnel, with informational and educational sessions featuring best practices and strategies for facilitating student success. The [fall 2021 conference](#) focused on helping first year students to succeed in the current vastly-challenging educational environment.

Sources

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- [Arizona Revised Statute_41 609_3.C.7](#)
- [AsianHires_3.C.1](#)
- [BlackCareers_3.C.1](#)
- [DisabilityJobs_3.C.1](#)
- [DiversityJobs_3.C.1](#)
- [Handshake_3.C.1](#)
- [HigherEdJobs_3.C.1](#)

- HLC_NFI4 RSC Faculty Model_3.C.2
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- MCCCCD_AFPG Program_3.C.5
- MCCCCD_Arizona Regional OER Conference_3.C.5
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- MCCCCD_Equal Employment Opportunity_3.C.1
- MCCCCD_Faculty Agreement Adjunct Faculty Evaluation_3.C.4
- MCCCCD_Faculty Agreement FEP_3.C.4
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3.D - Core Component 3.D

The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

Argument

1.

RSC endeavors to provide students with the services they need in the most timely, convenient, and appropriate format, in keeping with its mission statement to "...support learners where they are." Consequently, in addition to a physical presence at the RSC Tempe location, the student support service infrastructure has always operated in multiple modalities, including in-person, online, live chat, telephone, and email.

Admissions, Registration & Records (AR&R)

As a community college, RSC has an open admissions policy. The [Admissions, Registration & Records Department](#) handles student registration, along with such functions as requests for transcripts, evaluating transfer credit for program seekers, determining residency for tuition, and [student identity verification](#), whereby all students are required to submit a government-issued photo ID at the time of admission. Employees also educate students on how to use the maricopa.edu portal for self-service with multiple resources available to registered MCCC students. A gap analysis of the 2019 *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL; n=316) indicates improvement in student perception that "registration for online courses is convenient." In 2019, the gap between importance and satisfaction for this area was 0.48, demonstrating improvement over a gap of 0.84 in 2016.

Financial Aid

The RSC [Financial Aid Office](#) provides assistance to students with navigating the financial aid process and ensuring timely student access to U.S. Department of Education Title IV Student Aid programs. The office is led by a Student Affairs Director who is responsible for all aspects of departmental evaluation, planning, and performance. Financial Aid staff perform all processing, including awarding, authorization, and return of federal funds, and encourage responsible borrowing by proactively discussing the attendant responsibility when loan debt is incurred. They are also responsible for scholarships, customer service, and support to the outsourced entities that assist with financial aid for the MCCC.

The MCCCDCD outsources Tier 1 Financial Aid calls to Blackboard, which is staffed by agents trained in financial aid processes. The level of service provided to students has evolved to meet the increasingly complex regulatory environment in accordance with District directives and initiatives. Additionally, students have 24/7 access to maricopa.edu, where they can receive help via the [Maricopa Verification Processing Center](#), view their award letters, and check the status of their files.

In FY2019-20, a total of 13,420 financial aid applications were received, and \$17.5 million was disbursed in federal aid and scholarships. A gap analysis of the 2019 *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL; n=316) indicates improvement in student perception that “the financial aid process at this college is clear.” In 2019, the gap between importance and satisfaction for this area was 0.56, demonstrating considerable improvement over a gap of 1.66 in 2016.

Counseling and Career Services

The [Counseling and Career Services Department](#) is staffed by two residential faculty co-chairs, five adjunct faculty, a career services manager, and a student services specialist. Counselors serve students with both urgent or non-urgent issues relating to grief/loss, mental health issues, study skills, and time management. In addition to in-person services at college locations, counselors are available by phone, email, and online chat. Also, the counseling department oversees student assistance with issues such as food insecurity, shut-down utilities, and homelessness. The counselors maintain strong working relationships with faculty and staff in order to collaborate effectively, and offer workshops for employees on multiple topics, such as de-escalating student situations, information regarding emergency funding sources, crisis information, and referral procedures. Counselors also provide targeted presentations for students and staff at the Adult Education locations, including test anxiety, career exploration, and resume/cover letter writing. Career Services are free to all new, continuing, and prospective students. Departmental [student contact statistics](#) for the past three fiscal years demonstrate the scope and range of services provided. A gap analysis of the 2019 *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL; n=316) indicates improvement in student perception that “online career services are available.” In 2019, the gap between importance and satisfaction for this area was 0.11, demonstrating improvement over a gap of 0.68 in 2016.

Credit-bearing [Counseling and Personal Development Courses](#) provide strategies for college success through instruction on topics such as time management, stress management, improving interpersonal skills, career exploration, and identifying values, interests, and personal strengths for career decision making.

Disability Resources and Services

RSC’s [Office of Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS) assists students with documented disabilities by providing appropriate accommodations in strict conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and [MCCCDCD Administrative Regulation 2.8: Students with Disabilities](#). The department is run by a Disability Services Manager and currently serves approximately 600 disability-registered students. Referrals are provided to other college services as appropriate. The office tracks all student information (disability needs, accommodations, correspondence, interaction with faculty and staff, etc.), allowing staff to review how many students are registered with specific disabilities in a given semester or year, and to plan for additional staffing resources, as needed. In fall 2021, DRS provided [disability resources and services training](#) to all residential and adjunct faculty, in conformance with district requirements.

Instructional Helpdesk

Because of the nontraditional nature of RSC's student body and its extensive online course offerings and large adjunct faculty cohort, RSC has a long-established dual helpdesk structure. In addition to the more familiar Technology Helpdesk which is discussed below (3.D.4), RSC has an [Instructional Helpdesk](#) to assist online students with course-related questions, facilitate student interactions in the New Student Orientation (NSO), and assist the Faculty Chairs as needed in the mentoring, training, and evaluation of adjunct faculty. The Instructional Helpdesk is headed by an Instructional Services Supervisor, with one full-time and three part-time employees who are also experienced, fully-credentialed adjunct faculty members, providing a broad, cross-disciplinary knowledge base in assisting students and adjunct faculty with issues related to online teaching and learning. Over 1,300 helpdesk tickets were submitted by students and adjunct faculty in FY2020-21, and improvements in the IHD ticket-creation process allowed for categorization by type and sub-service. The majority of questions pertained primarily to navigation and communication within the RioLearn LMS. The data-gathering refinements that were implemented will allow for more specific tracking, targeting, and remediation of prevalent issues moving forward.

Testing Services

RSC's [Testing Services](#) department provides in-person testing at nine RSC locations across Maricopa County, offering college midterm and final exams, course placement options, prior learning exams for credit, certification exams, adult basic education assessments, and extensive proctoring services for other colleges and organizations. The College is a certified member of the [National College Testing Association](#) (NCTA) and adheres to their standards and guidelines. RSC received official NCTA re-certification in November 2020. Students are served on a walk-in or appointment basis, with extended evening and weekend hours to accommodate nontraditional students' schedules. RSC was the first college to administer computer-based GED and Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) testing in Arizona, and it is the primary provider of GED exams statewide.

On average, Testing Services administers 60,000 exams annually, provides proctoring for over 18,000 distance learning students per year, and grades approximately 8,000 paper-based assessments.

Tutoring Services

RSC offers free [tutoring](#) services in 19 subject areas, preparation for GED and placement exams, and writing across the curriculum. Services are provided in person or via synchronous virtual meeting software. The face-to-face options are offered during late afternoon and evening hours and on Saturdays to provide maximum convenience for nontraditional working students. A full-time Learning Support Analyst supervises a group of approximately 10-15 tutors. As previously mentioned, tutors are subject-matter experts, of whom over 90% have master's degrees, and approximately 70% are credentialed adjunct faculty. Additional tutoring is available online through an outsourced contract with [Brainfuse](#), which offers 24x7 services in some subject areas. For the past two fiscal years, usage of the RSC tutoring services is as follows:

Face-to-face Virtual and In-person Tutoring:

- FY2019-20: 1,623 sessions; approximately 1,826 hours
- FY2020-21: 1,275 sessions; approximately 1,594 hours

Online Tutoring: Brainfuse

- FY2019-20: 10,301 sessions; 6,056 hours

- FY2020-21: 9,200 sessions; 5,159 hours

A gap analysis of the 2019 *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL; n=316) indicates improvement in student perception that “tutoring services are readily available for online courses.” In 2019, the gap between importance and satisfaction for this area was 0.6, demonstrating improvement over a gap of 0.82 in 2016.

2.

Assessment and Placement

In accordance with [MCCCD policy](#), students who need to enroll in an English, reading, or mathematics course are advised and placed into the appropriate course based on a [multiple measures approach](#) to placement. These measures include High School GPA, ACT, SAT, GED, Accuplacer and scores from [EdReady](#)—a tool provided by the MCCCD at no cost to students that assesses English, math, and reading knowledge, then creates a personalized study plan to master the concepts required for course placement. Preparatory education is further provided through RSC’s [Adult Education](#) programs described in Criterion 1.C.1, and the RSC [Math Emporium](#) located at the Northern location staffed by a math “concierge” who acts as tutor, small group presenter, and coach.

Become a Student Enrollment Guides

RSC has developed a guided, online process for shepherding students through the [enrollment process by student type](#), featuring steps tailored to their educational goals. These checklists walk new students through the process of creating an account, exploring program options, researching funding options, and registering for classes.

New Student Orientation (NSO101)

[NSO101](#) is a free non-credit class that serves the same purpose as in-person orientation offered at traditional colleges. NSO101 is automatically added to students’ schedules when they register for their first class if they are degree- or certificate-program seekers, or plan to transfer to a bachelor’s degree program. The orientation is offered via the RioLearn LMS, and therefore familiarizes students with the learning management system that they will use for their online classes. Approximately 9,500 students completed the NSO each year between FY2019 and FY2020.

Learning Support

The RSC [Welcome Students](#) page provides a number of resources to support incoming students, including a [RioLearn tutorial](#). The Technology Helpdesk includes the [Is Your Computer Ready?](#) checklist for verifying required hardware and software needs in preparation for online learning.

3.

RSC’s [Academic Advisors](#) work with students towards completing degree or certificate programs that meet their career and university transfer goals, and build proactive relationships to ensure that every program-seeking student has a semester-by-semester plan. [RioCompass](#), a secure RSC portal developed in-house, provides students, staff, and faculty with 24x7 comprehensive resources designed for facilitating student success and goal completion. Students and advisors are also able to review the [Degree Progress Report](#) and [Pathway Planner](#) in SIS to map out needed courses for program completion. Appointments are available in-person, via Zoom, or by telephone.

Under the Guided Pathways approach described in Criterion 3.A.1, Academic Advisors have been organized into five teams for the nine fields of interest, as follows: Team 1. Applied Technology, Computer & Information Technology, STEM; Team 2. Behavioral Science and Human Services; Team 3. Business, Entrepreneurialism, and Management; Culture & Society, Team 4. Visual & Performing Arts; Team 5. Education, Health Sciences. Lead advisors are paired with the relevant discipline faculty chairs, allowing advisors to develop expertise and resources for student needs in particular Fields of Interest.

Once a program is declared in the Student Information System (SIS), an advisor is automatically assigned in RioCompass in alignment with the student's FOI. An automated series of five emails is sent over the first eight weeks, designed around the [First Year Experience](#). Advisors are expected to work with students a minimum of once per semester, and reach out to them through multiple modalities, including telephone, email, and text. The ratio of advisors to program-seekers is approximately 500/600 to 1.

RSC's non-program-seeking (guest/supplemental) students have access to advisement services as follows:

- Students taking courses for personal or professional reasons have a generic Student Services section in the RioLearn course portal that directs them to the AnswerNet call center. Representatives triage these contacts and either assist or forward them on to an advisor as indicated.
- Students taking courses for another college or university are assisted regarding RSC policies and processes as needed, but advising is provided primarily by the home institution.

4.

Technological Infrastructure

As a technology college supporting large cohorts of online students and faculty, RSC places primary emphasis on ensuring that its online systems are reliable and scalable. Substantial budget resources have been devoted to a technology infrastructure which includes state-of-the-art equipment and appropriate backup systems for both the online systems and the physical plant. The [Division of Technology and Infrastructure](#) is headed by the Vice President of Technology and Infrastructure, with teams dedicated to Technical Support, Networking, and Programming.

- **Technology Helpdesk**

The Technical Support Team, under the Manager of Technical Support, runs the [Technology Helpdesk](#), part of a comprehensive college helpdesk system used to house data related to student and employee issues that can then be referenced by authorized personnel in various departments. The Technology Helpdesk supports students by troubleshooting technology-related course issues, and it supports employees by installing and updating hardware and software, as well as addressing any technology-related problems. Technical support is provided via telephone, email, live chat, and in-person service, and helpdesk tickets are logged when students and employees call or submit issues online. Over the past three fiscal years, the technical support team fielded over 20,000 calls per year. A gap analysis of the 2019 *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL; n=316) indicates improvement in student perception that “appropriate technical assistance is readily available.” In 2019, the gap between importance for this area and satisfaction was 0.26, demonstrating

improvement over a 0.62 gap in 2016.

Course Technology Infrastructure

- **RioLearn**

[RioLearn](#), RSC's customized, scalable Learning Management System, was created in-house close to two decades ago to accommodate 40+ annual “start” dates and the need to scale up the online “one course, many sections” model as opposed to individual faculty course creation. As online sections fill, new sections are automatically created based on the master course, with associated instructors staffed and enrolled students assigned and linked to the appropriate section. More information about RioLearn is provided in Criterion 5.C.5.

- **Instructional Design and Technology**

In implementing the “one course, many sections” model, the [Instructional Design and Technology Department](#) assists Faculty Chairs in the course design and project management of online, hybrid, and mixed-media RSC courses. Course content and assessment materials are developed in collaboration with the chairs or their designated developers (typically experienced adjunct faculty), following an established course design model and aligned with the curriculum and official course competencies in the [MCCCD course bank](#). Under the purview of an associate dean, the department employs nine instructional designers, a team of part time editors, and also incorporates an instructional media department. Instructional designers are trained in the Quality Matters™ rubric, while some are Certified Course Reviewers for post-secondary online courses. Additionally, the RSC Library Instructional Coordinator provides research services as part of the instructional design workflow, thereby enabling seamless integration of library resources and OER into online courses and ensuring compliance with copyright law.

- **Course Production**

The Course Production team, comprising a director and 15 employees, produces and maintains the 1,194 live courses offered in RioLearn-- online, hybrid, print-based, and ESP (fall 2021). An in-house [Course Lifecycle tracking system](#) provides real-time information for all processes: development, production, maintenance, and deactivation. A total of 282 new courses or major course revisions were completed in FY2020-21, and approximately 2,000 hours in staff time were expended on edits to live courses.

Improvement in Online Lesson Delivery

Data from the *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL), administered five times between 2008-2019, indicate that "the quality of online instruction is excellent" (while improved in 2019 from 2016) remains an area of opportunity for RSC. The RSC 2016-19 Strategic Plan included "Innovative Curriculum Models" as one of the eight strategic pathways, providing administrative support and budget for faculty to explore options for improvement to the static content prevalent in the majority of RSC online courses. As a result of this work, in 2018, RSC adopted the cloud-based authoring and delivery platform, [CourseArc](#), to enhance the quality of instruction by transforming how courses are delivered in the RioLearn LMS. Improvements included the ability for faculty to chunk content; create mini interactive self-check assessments; seamlessly embed multimedia resources; monitor student lesson engagement; and update lessons on the fly, if needed.

Over 700 courses were converted to the CourseArc platform by fall 2021. Additional elearning implementations in fall 2021 included [RioConnect](#) and [Packback](#), platforms that enable the creation of communities within a discipline or other subgroup, such as Honors students. Packback includes an Artificial Intelligence algorithm that ranks responses to assist with more robust discussions, and some faculty are using discussion prompts in the platform as the basis for graded course assignments.

Laboratory Access

- **Science Lab**

The RSC Science Lab is a unique concept designed to meet the needs of students enrolled in online science laboratory courses. Employees assemble kits that are sold through the College Bookstore for 13 distinct courses in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Physical Science, and Physics. The Science Lab Assistant works closely with the faculty chairs of these departments in the creation and modification of the kit components, maintaining a quality product at the lowest possible cost to the students. During the past three fiscal years, approximately 3,000 kits were assembled and sold each year. Science Lab employees attend laboratory health and safety training to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

- **Virtual Microscope**

An innovation developed specifically for RSC, the [virtual microscope](#) enables students in online biology courses to simulate the experience of operating a microscope.

- **Computer Labs**

RSC provides [Computer Labs](#) at four college locations in Maricopa County, and lab staff members assist students in-person, online via email or chat, and by telephone. The Computer Labs include four Instructional Teams with each team led by a full-time employee, who is a certified CIS instructor, and 12 part-time lab technicians. The Instructional Teams are also responsible for grading CIS online assignments while they are on lab duty. During the past three fiscal years, the Instructional Teams graded student work in over 195 sections of eight distinct online courses, which represented 3,587 students and thousands of assignments. During the same period, the computer lab teams supported student learning in 70 different credit courses across multiple disciplines, with a duplicated computer login count of 12,218. Also, students use the labs to register, submit financial aid paperwork, request transcripts, and take proficiency or placement practice tests.

Library Services

[Library Services](#) are primarily focused on reaching online students and serving the college locations. Four credentialed librarians include the Faculty Co-Chairs for Library Services, a Library Instructional Coordinator, and a Manager of Access Services, along with two support staff. Several credentialed adjunct library faculty also provide online reference and instructional support for RSC students. A small physical library at the RSC Tempe location serves students and employees who also have borrowing privileges for the collections of all MCCCDC libraries totaling 616,690 items, as well as interlibrary loan services. Additionally, the library has installed collections of books and media at several RSC locations, which are customized to the specific student populations. The online library provides access to approximately 113 databases of journals, magazines, newspaper articles, media, and ebook collections containing approximately 240,000 volumes. Usage statistics are tracked

continually to provide a mechanism for data-driven budget decisions. The library is consistently in the [top ten most-visited sites](#) on the RSC website. As of spring 2021 there were also 2,592 library-licensed database articles and streaming films directly integrated into multiple sections of 277 distinct courses in RioLearn.

Reference services are provided in person and via telephone, but most RSC students are served via the [Ask a Librarian](#) virtual reference chat service, which is supported by the MCCCDC for all the colleges. In FY2019-20, RSC students accounted for almost 30% of the MCCCDC's total chats; the highest usage of the system across the District. Post-chat exit survey data in this period indicated 89.7% agreement by RSC students that they would recommend the service to someone else, while 87.7% agreed that the librarian fully understood their question, and 83.3% agreed that they had learned something new.

Librarians create and provide information literacy video tutorials designed to assist students with basic information, research skills, and ethical use of information. These tutorials are embedded within RioLearn courses, shared with dual enrollment instructors, and made available from the library's [tutorial page](#) and the [RSC YouTube channel](#). Customized [research guides](#), which garnered 85,868 views in FY2019-20, assist students and faculty with comprehensive strategies and content for conducting research over a wide number of subject areas, and many are embedded in relevant courses.

The information literacy library instruction program targets multiple student population groups: online; dual enrollment; and location students. In addition to the information literacy video tutorials, Library Faculty provide in-person or virtual library instruction sessions to dual enrollment and location classes. In FY2019-20, in-person library instruction was provided to 1,277 dual enrollment, dental, and other location students in 58 course sections.

A gap analysis of the 2019 *Priorities Survey for Online Learners* (PSOL; n=316) indicates improvement in student perception that “adequate online library resources are provided.” In 2019, the gap between importance and satisfaction for this area was 0.19, demonstrating improvement over a gap of 0.49 in 2016.

Clinical Practice Sites

Dental Programs

The Dental Faculty Chair serves as the director of the RSC [Dental programs](#), and is responsible for overseeing and managing equipment needs and issues in conformance with current concepts of dental hygiene practice. The programs are separately accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). The RSC [Dental Clinic](#) contains 21 complete, functional treatment units for use during preclinical and clinical instruction, including state-of-the-art dental chairs, wall-mounted sinks, assistant stools, dental handpieces, radiographic equipment, sterilization equipment, and cabinetry. In addition, there is a classroom at the Northern location that is utilized primarily for dental materials lab sessions, with seating for 22 students, instructor computer, and projector screen, along with dental simulation units and laboratory equipment. The buildings are fully ADA compliant, allowing disabled persons to be accommodated for all treatment procedures.

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3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Summary

- RSC provides high-quality courses and programs through online, hybrid, face-to-face, ESP, dual enrollment, and correspondence modalities.
- RSC's 40+ weekly start dates ensure that both credential-seeking and supplemental/guest students have immediate access to courses, including those in the General Studies Program.
- RSC has transitioned to the MCCCDC Guided Pathways model, enabling students to chart a clear, coherent pathway to timely goal completion.
- RSC maintains a unique faculty and instructional support model that is ideally suited to its nontraditional structure.
- Faculty qualifications conform with HLC requirements and Assumed Practice B.2, and are consistent for all courses and programs.
- Ongoing professional development for all adjunct faculty is mandated and tracked.
- RSC has improved content delivery in the RioLearn LMS by adopting CourseArc, a cloud-based content-authoring and delivery platform.
- RSC is dedicated to universal accessibility and equitable access for all learners, and invests in infrastructure that includes dedicated personnel, Open Educational Resources (OER), disability resources, and software solutions in support of these efforts.
- A comprehensive network of student services and resources is offered in multiple modalities and locations.

Sources

There are no sources.

4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

Argument

1.

Program Review at RSC is a mature process that was initiated in 2007 via membership in the HLC Academy for the Assessment of Student Learning. During five years of Academy membership, the College developed, piloted, and refined a [formal program review model](#) that has proven to be sustainable and has been adjusted and modified several times to align closely with institutional goals. These processes allow the College to make an in-depth examination of its programs, incorporating both curricular and co-curricular components, to ensure that the program is effective, relevant, and supports the college mission. RSC defines a program as “a set of college-level courses resulting in a certificate or degree,” which includes General Education. Faculty Chairs are responsible for conducting program reviews with the support of Institutional Research. A structured [Program Review Template](#) contains foundational components, such as goals and learning outcomes for the program, assessment of college-wide student learning outcomes, strategies used to increase student learning, and program resources. Depending on the program, additional elements may also be included, such as external accreditations. Learning Assessment Team members examine the reviews and provide feedback to the Faculty Chair as part of an iterative process. Final reviews include one of the

following recommendations from the Team:

- Continue the program and implement the stated action plan, with the next review due in 3-5 years.
- Continue the program, implement the stated action plan, and address specific areas identified during the review, with a spotlight follow-up report due in 1-2 years.
- Refer to college administration to determine program viability.
- Discontinue program.

The reviews are then submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for approval or additional action.

Five program reviews were completed in AY2020-21. Of these, two were recommended for discontinuation--[Furniture and Cabinet Making](#) (which is being replaced by Construction Electrician--see p.15), and [Computer Technology](#) (owing to changes from Guided Pathways--see p.38). Recommendations for the [Sustainable Foods Program Review](#) resulted in curricular proposals for three micro-credentials, which also support Goal 2 of the College's Strategic Plan (see p.24). A follow-up report will be required in fall 2023 to track progress and determine whether additional action is indicated. Declining persistence rates that surfaced during the [Risk Management and Insurance Program Review](#) prompted budget reallocation to fund scholarships for continuing students (see p.6-8). Faculty Chairs are responsible for closing the loop on recommendations and decisions that surface during the review process.

Once the evaluation cycle has been completed, the review is posted to the [Program Review](#) page of the RSC public assessment website. Four more programs are scheduled to begin the review process during AY2021-22, with additional programs added each year according to the master [Program Review Schedule](#).

2.

With regard to transfer credit and prior learning assessment (PLA), RSC adheres to the MCCCDC [Transfer Credit and Prior Learning Assessment Policy 2.2.4](#). In accordance with this policy, RSC conducts [prior learning assessment](#) in a variety of ways, including national standardized tests, such as Advanced Placement (AP), College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DSST (formerly DANTES); faculty-approved equivalency lists; departmental credit by evaluation; credit by examination; portfolio assessment; and professional licenses and certifications. RSC leads the MCCCDC in awarding credit for prior learning, and participated in *The PLA Boost*, a study conducted by CAEL and WICHE (updated December 2020) which concluded that PLA is associated with better student outcomes, including higher credential completion, cost savings, and time savings. Over the past five years, students who earned [PLA credit accounted for 10% of awards completed](#) at RSC.

3.

RSC's Admissions, Registration & Records department evaluates transfer credit for equivalency in accordance with the above-mentioned policy. Courses that do not appear on existing faculty-approved equivalency lists are forwarded to the appropriate Faculty Chair for evaluation. Transfer credit for program-seekers is reviewed upon receipt of transcripts, and the data are then uploaded to the Student Information System (SIS) database, where staff create checklists that indicate how the student's prior coursework has been applied to the program of study.

4.

RSC's program quality, curricular rigor and expectations, consistency of learning goals, and access to learning resources across all modalities were addressed in Criterion 3.

Dual Enrollment

RSC has over 25 years of experience offering dual enrollment courses throughout Maricopa County. The [MCCCD Dual Enrollment Catalog](#) governs which courses may be offered. The RSC Faculty Chairs oversee all academic aspects of the program, including instructor qualification, instructor evaluation, prerequisite enforcement, and textbook selection. Students taking courses for dual credit must meet the same learning outcomes as students taking “traditional” college courses, and dual syllabi submitted by instructors via the Syllabus Builder (described in Criterion 3.C.5) must demonstrate that the topics taught and assessed align with the district-wide course competencies, as seen in this sample [SOC 101 syllabus](#). Some dual courses share identical materials with online counterparts, as evidenced by the [dual enrollment BPC170 syllabus](#) in comparison with the [online syllabus for BPC170](#). RSC dual enrollment credits transfer to all Arizona public colleges and universities, and additional articulation agreements are in place with a variety of private and out-of-state institutions. During FY2019-20, RSC's dual enrollment program offered 150 different courses at 39 high schools throughout Maricopa County, and over 8,200 students took more than 26,500 classes, earning more than 76,500 RSC college credits.

Dual enrollment students are required to meet standard MCCCD [under-18 admission requirements](#), and they are approved to register for courses according to the district-level [assessment and placement criteria](#) that govern all MCCCD students.

RSC maintains a Dual Enrollment Office with a comprehensive infrastructure in place to support the school locations. Dual staff meet regularly with designated high school liaisons to collect registration paperwork, disseminate information, and resolve student issues. Dual team members also meet with administrators at high schools and school districts to receive feedback and explore new ideas for future dual offerings. Further, the RSC Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS) supports dual enrollment students as needed.

Dual Enrollment Faculty Qualifications

As indicated in Criterion 3.C.3, instructors who teach dual enrollment classes must meet the same HLC required minimum qualifications as other RSC faculty. In conformance with HLC policy, dual enrollment instructors have until September 1, 2023, to meet the credentialing requirements. As of June 2021, RSC had a total of 572 active dual enrollment instructors. Of these, 499 met the HLC-mandated faculty credentials and 38 were on Individual Development Plans (IDPs) to meet the requirements prior to the deadline. A further 35 instructors (who are close to retirement or do not wish to pursue further coursework) have opted out and will no longer be hired to teach dual enrollment classes after the 2023 deadline.

Dual Enrollment Student Access to Learning Resources

In addition to online library access commensurate with all other RSC students, the Instruction Librarian provides a structured program to students at dual enrollment location schools, as described in Criterion 3.D. In addition, the Ask a Librarian 24/7 live chat service is available to students at all times.

Dual Enrollment Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Dual enrollment students are included in college-wide student learning outcomes assessment via the ETS Proficiency Profile. Data indicate that this cohort consistently demonstrates college-level achievement in critical thinking, reading, writing, and mathematics, including the three academic sub-set areas (humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences). [Spring 2018 ETS data](#) indicated that dual enrollment students (N=43) averaged a mean total score of 439.1 (out of 500), slightly higher than the 2018 ETS comparative cohort average (438.6) from 63 associate-degree-granting institutions across the United States. Plans to administer the ETS to a dual enrollment cohort in both spring 2020 and 2021 were postponed, and it is now scheduled for spring 2022. Additionally, as part of the RSC library instruction program, dual enrollment students are formally assessed on their [Information Literacy skills](#).

Dual Enrollment Alumni

[Surveys completed by the 2018 Alumni cohort](#) (N=181) indicate that an average of 17.8 college credits per student were earned from RSC dual enrollment courses. Seventy-five percent (136) of students successfully transferred an average of 19.9 credits. When comparing the level of difficulty of RSC dual enrollment courses with current college or university courses, 82% of those who entered a two-year public college after graduation from high school and 72% of those who enrolled in four-year public universities indicated that RSC dual enrollment courses were at least as challenging as the courses at their current institutions. Further, 97.6% of respondents agreed that they would recommend the RSC dual enrollment program to current high school students.

5.

RSC maintains specialized accreditation for the following programs:

- Addictions and Substance Use Disorders—[National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission](#) (NASAC) and [The Association for Addiction Professionals](#) (NAADAC)
- Dental Hygiene—[Commission on Dental Accreditation](#) (CODA)
- Educator Preparation Programs—[Arizona Department of Education](#) (ADE)
- Spanish Medical Interpretation—[Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters](#) (CCHI)

6.

Quality of Programs and Credentials

In a [2020 RSC graduate alumni survey](#), respondents expressed high satisfaction with their experience with RSC, with 91% indicating that the College met or exceeded their expectations (n=550). The credentials they earned proved valuable in the workplace, as 75% indicated that their current position was related to the degree or certificate they earned at RSC and 71% indicated that RSC provided the skills needed for their current job. [This student testimonial](#) illustrates how earning a credential from Rio leads to success in the workplace.

Goal 2 of the RSC Strategic Plan aims to offer 23 new micro-credentials by 2024, with an investment priority to innovate in collaboration with partner organizations. The MCCCDC is the largest provider of workforce education in Arizona, with RSC the largest provider in the District. In FY2019-20, RSC was responsible for 21% of the MCCCDC occupational enrollment Full-time Student Equivalent (FTSE) and over 39% of the occupational completion, through Associate of Applied Science and

Certificate of Completion awards.

The MCCCDC Institutional Research Department partnered with Equifax to begin collecting [student earnings data for graduates](#) in 2019. The data provide median wages for students three years after graduation from RSC, and indicate that over the last five cohort years, wages have been steadily increasing. RSC students who graduated with Associate degrees in 2017 had median earnings of nearly \$44,500, compared to nearly \$40,000 for graduates with certificates.

Program/Workforce Alignment

- **Educational Service Partnerships (ESP)**

The ESP program (see Criterion 1.B.3) constitutes a direct link between workforce partners and employment. A key indirect indicator of student achievement is post-completion employment, or the frequency of ESP students who are placed in related positions upon successful completion of each program. Once fully-trained, program students enter their assigned positions/roles and begin their careers or professions within the company.

- **Dental Hygiene Program**

The [100% pass rate](#) (within two attempts) for RSC students who took the Dental Hygiene National Board Examination, the Western Region Examining Board Clinical, and the Commission on Dental Competency Assessments provides clear evidence that the AAS program in Dental Hygiene prepares graduates for employment in the field. A fall 2021 MCCCDC [Healthcare Graduates Workforce Outcomes Survey](#) indicates that 95% of RSC Dental Hygiene Graduates who responded (N=20) have secured employment either full- or part-time in the field.

- **Paralegal Program**

RSC's AAS and CCL in Paralegal programs prepare a diverse student body, from recent high school graduates to returning adults, to enter the legal field. The AAS earned "Best of the Southwest" recognition on the list of [Best Paralegal Degree Programs for 2021](#) by Intelligent.com. The certificate program was named one of the [Top Entry-Level, Pre-Degree Paralegal Certificate Programs](#) in the nation by ParalegalEDU.org, noting that the college has an 83% on-time completion rate, which is among the best in the field. An [interview with a faculty member](#) published on the site highlights the currency of the curriculum and internship opportunities as key elements contributing to the success of Rio graduates.

- **Teacher Education Program**

The Teacher Education program is designed to prepare students for teacher certification and endorsement from the Arizona Department of Education. [Success of graduates](#) can be measured in two ways: student scores on AEPA/NES exams, which are required by the state prior to certification being granted, and job placement rates. On the AEPA/NES exams, 97% of all program completers from FY2015-20 successfully passed the assessment. For those students who disclosed their employment status, the job placement rate was approximately 70%. In 2018, RSC's Teacher-in-Residence Program was one of the [highest-ranked secondary programs](#) by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ).

Transfer Student Outcomes

Through guaranteed articulation pathways and partnership agreements, credits and credentials earned at RSC are accepted in transfer at all three state universities as well as over [40 other institutions of higher education](#). Guest/supplemental students, whose academic intent is not to earn a certificate or degree from RSC, comprise nearly 75% of all learners, and within that population, 34% of students declare a specific intent to transfer. An RSC [Transfer Student Outcomes report](#) provides detailed data on transfer activity for the five years between AY2016 and AY2020.

A 2018 [Boston Consulting Group report](#) noted that RSC had a 32% transfer-out rate compared to a 19% average for other MCCCDC institutions, and a 74% four-year graduation rate for students who transferred to Arizona universities--three percentage points higher than the MCCCDC average (see p.46).

Graduate Transfer Success

In the 2020 RSC graduate alumni survey referenced above, almost a quarter of respondents indicated that their main goal for enrolling in an RSC program was to transfer to another college or university, and they were included in the 88% who stated that they were able to achieve their goals. Testimonials from a [nurse and former RSC student](#) and a [former ESP student](#) are just two examples of how RSC graduates are able to successfully transition to higher-level degree programs. Data from the National Student Clearinghouse on [subsequent degrees earned by RSC graduates](#) provide additional evidence that RSC credentials prepare students for advanced study.

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4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

Argument

1.

Program-level Learning Outcomes Assessment

Program learning outcomes, such as those for the [CCL in Paralegal](#), are posted on the RSC website, and student achievement data is accessible via the published program reviews. As indicated in 4.A.1, as part of the program review process, faculty chairs are responsible for addressing results that do not meet the target. For example, the [Paralegal Program Review](#) includes curricular modifications that were implemented to address low student performance on one of the program-learning outcomes (see p.12).

College-wide Learning Outcomes Assessment

RSC has established the following college-wide outcomes for assessment of student learning across the curriculum, and created rubrics to provide for standardized assessment of these outcomes across disciplines:

- [Critical Thinking](#)
- [Information Literacy](#)
- [Oral Communication](#)
- [Reading](#)
- [Writing](#)

These rubrics are posted on the RSC public [assessment website](#). In addition to applying standardized rubrics to course-level assessments, RSC administers the nationally-normed ETS Proficiency Profile to assess student performance on these cross-college outcomes and compare them with peer institutions. Results from course-level assessments, ETS administrations, and other outcomes work are posted to the public website in the form of annual assessment reports (see Criterion 4.B.2 below). These outcomes are also assessed at the program level as part of the program review process described in Criterion 4.A.1.

Co-curricular Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

RSC has identified four representative co-curricular student cohorts (Honors, Phi Theta Kappa, the National Society for Leadership and Success, and Adult ACE) to determine academic performance in college-wide student learning outcomes. During AY2019-20, course-level data from close to 1.6 million student assessments were analyzed to determine performance by these students. The findings demonstrated that a greater percentage of [co-curricular students performed at college level](#) for all five cross-college student learning outcomes as compared with the general student body, ranging from 84% to 87% of co-curricular students. Co-curricular data are also examined at the course-, program-, and institutional level as part of the program review process.

2.

The RSC [Assessment Philosophy](#) is posted on the assessment website and in the College Catalog.

The Learning Assessment Team

The Learning Assessment Team includes representation from faculty chairs (who serve as assessment coordinators for the college-wide student learning outcomes), senior academic administrators, and Institutional Research personnel, and coordinates all aspects of student learning assessment. An annual [Assessment of Student Learning Report](#) details results of student learning outcomes assessment at the institution-, program-, and course level; identifies best practices; and indicates areas for improvement and future growth. The report is shared with RSC employees, including adjunct faculty members at All-Faculty Meetings, and posted to the public website.

PDCA Cycles

RSC has a “systems” culture grounded in the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), and is accustomed to using a TQM tool, the [Plan-Do-Check-Act \(PDCA\) cycle](#), to collect data, assess outcomes, and implement improvements based on the data. This culture of assessment and improvement will be explained further in Criterion 5.C.2. In addition to institution-level data collected for the college-wide student learning outcomes, course-level measurement is conducted via PDCA cycles. Faculty chairs [report their PDCA cycles](#) on an annual basis as a component of departmental reports that are submitted to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and PDCA cycle examples are also included in the annual assessment report. An example of a course-level PDCA cycle that aligns with both a program-level outcome and a college-wide student learning outcome was initiated in [GBS233](#) (Business Communication) during AY2020-21.

3.

Collaborative Assessment Processes

As indicated above, RSC has a culture of assessment that involves stakeholders across the College. Maintaining a small cohort of residential faculty who serve as chairs, represent multiple disciplines, and meet biweekly facilitates effective interdisciplinary decision-making. Within the framework of this model, Faculty Chairs and Deans have implemented collaborative and integrated processes for assessment of student learning at the college-, program-, and course levels.

Adjunct Faculty

RSC’s adjunct faculty play a critical role in college assessment practices. Assessment strategies and data updates are shared at one of the biannual All-Faculty Meetings. Adjunct faculty also participate

in discipline-specific discussions of assessment content during biannual department meetings, which might include best practices for grading assignments using [customized assignment rubrics](#). Budget is allocated every year to fund [Rio Learning Outcomes Grants](#) (RioLogs), which provide a mechanism for Faculty Chairs to engage adjunct faculty in developing learning-outcomes-based initiatives, directly linked to assessment data, to drive curricular improvements. As detailed in Criterion 3.C.5, the College has also created AFD courses on the college-wide student learning outcomes to support adjunct faculty assessment work in those areas. Articles recognizing RSC's methods to fully integrate adjunct faculty members in assessment practices have been published by the [National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment](#) (NILOA) and the [American Association of Community Colleges](#).

Institutional Research

RSC's Institutional Research (IR) Department is an integral part of its culture of assessment. The associate dean serves on the Learning Assessment Team, and IR collects and reports on student learning outcomes at the institution-, program-, and course levels, administers nationally-normed assessments, and provides substantial data for program review. The creation and evolution of the Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD) described below is a direct result of the IR team's innovative actualization of faculty needs.

MCCCD Assessment Collaboration

Since the District moved to a Guided Pathways model in fall 2020 (see Criterion 3.A.1), more cross-district collaboration has emerged to discuss which types of assessment data colleges should uniformly collect to ensure that program outcomes are being met across all colleges (e.g., to determine whether "swirling students"--those taking courses at more than one MCCCD college--are meeting program outcomes). RSC's Learning Assessment Team Co-Chairs participate in monthly district-wide [MCCCD assessment leaders meetings](#) to further these discussions.

ETS Proficiency Profile

The ETS Proficiency Profile is an assessment designed to measure general education academic competence in four core skill areas that align with three of the RSC college-wide student learning outcomes: critical thinking, reading, and writing, as well as mathematics. These skill areas are measured in three different contexts: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. ETS data specific to dual enrollment students were shared in Criterion 4.A.4. RSC has administered the assessment three times since 2015, most recently in 2019. The results from the [2019 ETS assessment](#) (N=43) are unique compared to previous years, with the majority of students coming from the Adult ACE program. This cohort includes students who may have barriers of language, years out of a classroom, and/or possible stigmas related to learning that could impact their scores. In the interim, student learning outcomes of Adult ACE students continue to be tracked and assessed by the RSC DADD, described below.

Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD)

The Dynamic Assessment Data Display (DADD) is an in-house web-based tool to capture student learning analytics. Initially created as an Excel spreadsheet where chairs would input assessment data, the DADD has evolved into an award-winning source of real-time, on-demand, data that chairs can use to make informed decisions with regard to needed instructional interventions, and then track their effectiveness. DADD results can also be sorted by student demographic (including race/ethnicity, gender, college-readiness, and Pell-eligibility) to reveal potential achievement gaps

and vulnerable populations. These efforts to achieve equitable learning outcomes across all student populations were recognized by the WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET), when RSC was named a 2019 WCET Outstanding Work ([WOW](#)) award-winner. The [WOW application](#) is posted to the assessment public website. RSC was also profiled in a [WCET Frontiers article](#) focused on equitable learning outcomes. In 2020, the College was featured in a [toolkit](#) developed by Tyton Partners in partnership with Every Learner Everywhere, designed to help higher education institutions move forward with the implementation of learning analytics and equity research, with RSC's case study the only one from a non-four-year-degree institution. These efforts are in keeping with Goals 1 and 3 of the 2020-24 Strategic Plan.

A DADD modification in FY2019-20 allowed correspondence and print-based coursework assessment data (primarily from the Incarcerated Re-Entry program) to be more easily analyzed. Data indicated that 69% of these students were performing at or above college level in the three outcomes that were measured: Critical Thinking, Writing, and Reading. While this did not meet the RSC requirement level of 80%, disruptions to the IRE program as a result of facility shutdowns in 2020 did not allow for consistent learning experiences for IRE students. Assessment data for correspondence- and print-based modalities will be re-examined and closely monitored in FY2021-22 to determine student performance trends and design appropriate interventions.

Monitoring Student Outcomes in Objective Course Assignments

In addition to the DADD tool, in AY2020-21 the Learning Assessment Team oversaw the development of a new reporting mechanism to monitor student outcomes in objective course assignments. An item analysis report was developed that provides the ability to assess the quality of assessment items and of the assessment as a whole. This provides value in improving items which will be used again in later assessments, and can also be used to eliminate ambiguous or misleading items, as exemplified by this [MAT142 item analysis report](#).

Excellence in Assessment

RSC's assessment practices were nationally recognized when the College was selected as an [Excellence in Assessment \(EIA\) Designee](#) by the National Institute of Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA). RSC's journey to the EIA award through the PDCA framework was detailed in a 2018 article published in [Assessment Update](#). As continued recognition of strength in this area, an RSC faculty member was subsequently invited to serve as a NILOA reviewer for the award.

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4.C - Core Component 4.C

The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

Argument

1.

Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)

In the context of the [2020-24 Strategic Plan goals](#), executive leadership set college goals for student retention, persistence, and completion. In spring 2020, RSC began its research and planning to convene a cross-functional, college-wide SEM Committee, which involved a governance team charged with the following:

- Investigate underlying persistence and completion issues/opportunities
- Track student demographics to ensure all student groups make equitable progress
- Investigate current practices related to matriculation/enrollment
- Maintain current efforts and set metrics for monitoring and evaluation
- Monitor leading and lagging indicators
- Monitor intervention tools, analyze and evaluate effectiveness
- Recommend new interventions based on data analysis
- Develop annual RSC SEM Report

In FY2020-21, the SEM Steering Team developed a comprehensive [Strategic Enrollment Management \(SEM\) plan](#) designed to improve student persistence and completion rates. In addition to aligning directly with the RSC Strategic Plan goals, the SEM goals align with the [MCCCD Wildly Important Goal](#) (WIG) to increase equitable two-year completion and transfer rates.

2.

Institutional Data Steering Team (IDST)

The [Institutional Data Steering Team](#) (IDST) was constituted in FY2020-21, and coordinates, recommends, and monitors a variety of strategic actions using continuous data analysis to support the Strategic Plan and the SEM plan as part of its charter. More information about the IDST will follow in Criterion 5.A.2.

Microsoft Power BI

Microsoft Power BI is a data visualization and dashboarding solution aimed at increasing access to information and empowering decision makers. RSC's [Power BI environment](#) incorporates a comprehensive suite of reporting tools to enable monitoring of enrollment trends and student success outcomes, delivering operational datasets to working teams, and providing actionable insight to college stakeholders. This tool allows the IDST and individual departments to disaggregate and analyze [enrollment management data](#) to identify factors that impact student retention, persistence, and program completion. This continuous analysis enables RSC to quickly identify ineffective initiatives and reprioritize resources.

Completion and Persistence Data Reporting

In FY2019-20, RSC awarded 851 Associate Degrees, an increase of 17% from the prior year (705), and a total increase of 23% since FY2015-16, along with 3,590 Certificates of Completion and 30 Academic Certificates.

Through the program review model described in Criterion 4.A.1., Institutional Research pulls comprehensive data on course persistence, term-to-term persistence, year-to-year persistence, and award completion rates for each program undergoing review. Term persistence rates at RSC have increased slightly over the past four years from 37.9% in FY2016-17 to 39.3% in FY2019-20. Non-program-seeking students persist at higher rates than program-seeking students, and the program-seeking cohort saw declines in persistence rates over the four-year period. Students who receive financial aid persist at much higher rates than those who do not; 57.7% compared to 35.8% respectively in FY2019-20.

RSC's year-to-year persistence rates have seen higher increases over the past four years than term-to-term rates; however, they still lag behind term persistence rates overall. Year-to-year persistence rates follow a similar pattern to term persistence when comparing program-seeking and non-program-seeking students, with the latter persisting at higher rates than those who have indicated an intent to complete a certificate or degree (33.7% and 27.2% respectively in FY2019-20).

Since non-program-seeking (guest/supplemental) students comprise roughly 75% of the RSC population in a given academic year, a student intent survey was developed in fall 2019 to capture specific student outcomes for non-credential seekers. Students are asked to declare their specific academic intent, including how many RSC courses they intend to take. These data enable RSC to track completion of non-credential seeking student goals based on course-taking behaviors, and this information is incorporated into the [tracking of Strategic Plan Goal 1](#).

Institutional Research provides [weekly key metrics reporting](#) and [analysis](#) to teams across the College to track and monitor real-time progress on enrollment and persistence goals which incorporate regular [outreach contact updates](#). In fall 2021, in addition to outreach campaigns conducted by Student Affairs and Advisement personnel, Faculty Chairs and the Instructional Helpdesk also conducted targeted outreach to non-persisters from the prior year who were declared in specific programs.

3.

Guided Pathways

The Guided Pathways model, detailed in Criterion 3.A.1, is designed to improve persistence among program-seeking students. Baseline historic data, disaggregated by college, was made available via the MCCCDCD [NCII Guided Pathways](#) website. RSC implemented the model in fall 2020 as a strategy to increase retention and completion in alignment with Strategic Goal 1. An RSC Year One [Guided Pathways Progress Report](#) was published in fall 2021.

First Year Experience (FYE)

A districtwide cross-functional committee, which includes RSC representation, is working on strategies to ensure that all new-to-MCCCDCD degree and transfer-seeking students achieve the [FYE Learning Outcomes](#). A student success course to address the outcomes is planned for deployment to all MCCCDCD colleges in fall 2022. In anticipation of this work, the RSC Learning Assessment Team has created a preliminary [crosswalk](#) for assessment of these outcomes at the college level.

Academic Advising Department Redesign

In order to effectively support the Guided Pathways model, RSC's Academic Advising Department was redesigned, with advisors specializing in one of the nine [Fields of Interest](#) (FOI) and using a case management approach to work with students. Details of this model were provided in Criterion 3.D.3. Advisors are tracking data such as course substitutions and course completions, along with data from student-facing tools, to confirm that students are becoming more successful in pursuing their paths and staying on track.

Dual Enrollment Success Coaching

Coaching for Success in Early College gives dual enrollment students and parents information and support to accelerate time-to-degree completion. This enrollment strategy utilizes a success coach and strategically expands course offerings at the high school, thereby supplementing degree attainment through dual and concurrent enrollment. A dedicated success coach monitors student progress and assures that the dual enrollment courses taken are applicable to the student's career/academic pathways. In eight years, degree completion in early college has grown from one student to approximately 220.

Developmental Education Redesign

As mentioned in Criterion 1.C.2, the MCCCDCD [Developmental Education Transformation Version 1.0. redesign](#) was launched in January 2019 to increase access and success while decreasing equity gaps. The District Developmental Education Council (DEC), which includes RSC representation, set [ambitious goals for the redesign efforts](#). In an effort to place more eligible students in college-level courses, the District has moved to a [multiple measures methodology dashboard](#) which includes the use of EdReady (see Criterion 3.D.2), high school GPA, and nationally-normed assessments. RSC has seen increases in the percentage of students placing in college-level math, from 80.81% in AY2019 to 92.34% in AY2021.

Rio National

Pathway #6 of the RSC 2016-19 Strategic Plan centered around New Market Expansion. As a result

of this work, RSC launched [Rio National](#) in summer 2018, continuing its rich heritage as the MCCCDC "college without walls" in a 21st century context. Rio National was designed to address national workforce needs and expand access to higher education for underserved populations across the country, and ultimately also generate additional revenue for the College and District. The Rio National model includes a tuition cap at 11 or more credits, targeted outreach for new students, and success coaches who utilize intrusive advisement to ensure students continue toward successful goal attainment. Since FY2018-19, full-time student enrollments have increased by 26.6% and the average full-time student credits attempted have increased by 35.66%. In keeping with Goal 1 of the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, Rio National has helped RSC to increase the number of adults with postsecondary credentials. National students earned 104 awards in FY2018-19 and [231 awards in FY2020-21](#), a 122% increase over the past 3 academic years.

4.

Department-level Goals and Measures

Leadership across RSC is working with staff to address enrollment, retention, and completion deficiencies. These department-level initiatives, driven by the strategic plan goals, are monitored on a regular basis and tracked via [dedicated 4DX scoreboards](#) and at an institutional level on the [RSC Strategic Goals dashboard](#).

MCCCDC Governing Board Monitoring Report

The [Governing Board Performance Monitoring Report](#) provides an annual update on performance metrics for all MCCCDC institutions, including RSC. Three key areas are analyzed to determine student and organizational performance and determine progress towards MCCCDC Governing Board Outcomes: Leading Indicators of Student Success; Completion Outcomes; and Enrollment, Awards, and Transfer.

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

As mandated by federal regulation, RSC participates in IPEDS data collection and reporting. In the [2019-2020 IPEDS data submission](#), the First-time, Full-time Student Cohort, upon which most IPEDS data relies, represented approximately 0.5% of the College's fall student population. Because of RSC's high percentage of non-credential-seeking (guest/supplemental) students, IPEDS data do not accurately reflect its environment. Therefore, the College has sought out other methods for collecting and reporting on student outcomes, such as the Voluntary Framework of Accountability.

Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA)

RSC participates in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (VFA), established by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), to collect student outcomes data. The VFA is [designed as a set of appropriate measures](#) to determine how well community colleges are serving students, and gives a more comprehensive view of college student outcomes. In the 2019 VFA data submission, [RSC reported](#) two-year rates (the rate applied to community colleges) as follows: a graduation rate of 11.5%, a transfer-out rate of 49.3%, and a still-enrolled rate of 11.9%.

Success metrics for the credential-seeking VFA cohort (completing 12 or more credits by the end of the 2nd year of enrollment) indicate that RSC significantly outperforms peer institutions in both completion and transfer rates. A [VFA Peer Comparison Analysis](#) reveals that while RSC trails

significantly behind peer institutions in fall-spring persistence based on the main VFA cohort (again, a function of the high percentage of guest/supplemental students), the College compares well in terms of completion and successful transfer rates.

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4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

Summary

- RSC has a mature, consistent, and sustainable process for conducting formal, regular program review.
- Assessment of student learning outcomes is faculty-driven, and measured at the college-, program-, and course level through administration of nationally-normed instruments and ongoing, data-informed, improvement cycles (PDCA).
- RSC's assessment efforts have been recognized nationally.
- RSC is actively focused on the need to improve student enrollment, persistence, and completion, with multiple initiatives that include a detailed SEM plan, Guided Pathways model, Rio National, and Developmental Education redesign.

Sources

There are no sources.

5 - Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A - Core Component 5.A

Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

Argument

1.

District Governance

As detailed in Core Component 2.C, the [MCCCD Governing Board](#) is composed of publicly-elected representatives from five districts that make up the Maricopa County area, along with two representatives for the County at large, as well as a non-voting annually-elected [student board member](#). Primary outputs for board members are identified in the [Board Job Description](#). [Board committees](#) are charged with gathering information on a given topic and reporting back to the full board. Examples include focus areas such as Board Policy, Budget and Finance, and Charter Schools. Under the overarching [Maricopa Governance](#) structure, the [administrative regulations](#) provide for day-to-day management of District operations. The Governing Board serves in an oversight role and delegates day-to-day management to the Chancellor, per [Board Policy 3.3 Delegation to the Chancellor](#). The Chancellor is responsible for all authority and accountability of employees, and delegates implementation of the administrative regulations to appropriate personnel, such as members of the [Chancellor's Executive Council](#) (CEC). Other district-wide councils include the vice presidents of academic affairs, vice presidents of student affairs, occupational deans, etc. RSC is represented on all district-wide committees and councils, ensuring the ability to advocate for college-level needs at the district level of governance.

Rio Salado College Shared Governance Model

Collaboration and a “systems” approach to leadership are the hallmarks of RSC governance. These characteristics are clearly observable in the multi-layered structure that pervades each level of the

organization. In particular, there has long been a noteworthy culture of closeness and collaboration between administration and faculty leadership that is atypical in some higher education settings.

- The Executive Team ([executive](#) and faculty senate leadership), which meets twice a month, regularly reviews strategic plan progress and college data dashboards, such as enrollment goals.
- The [President's Cabinet](#) is an inclusive leadership body made up of college executive-, faculty-, and administrative leadership in addition to elected employee-, adjunct faculty-, and student senators. The Cabinet meets monthly in the fall and spring semesters, and discusses both strategic and relevant operational issues.
- The [President's Advisory Council](#), comprising external community members (see Criterion 1.B.3), meets biannually to receive updates and provide insight and linkages for administrative leadership with RSC's external constituencies.
- The Deans Council includes employees at the level of associate dean and above, who meet monthly to share information and discuss implementation of college initiatives and priorities.

Faculty Governance

Because of the especially collegial and collaborative relationship between faculty and administrators, RSC operates within the shared governance model through a variety of systemic and institutionalized processes that support the college culture.

- **Faculty Senate**

The faculty senate includes the entire [residential faculty cohort](#) as voting members, allowing all to have a voice in governance issues and the election of the faculty senate president. In addition to providing college-level leadership, the faculty senate president and president-elect serve two-year terms as RSC's representatives to the MCCCCD Faculty Association. The [Constitution of the Rio Salado College Faculty Senate](#) was last amended and approved in June, 2020.

- **The Vice President's Advisory Committee (VPAC)**

VPAC, which includes the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) and faculty leadership, meets regularly to discuss issues such as strategic initiatives, common academic policies, and faculty staffing. Faculty members of VPAC, dubbed the VP or "VEEP" Team, advise the VPAA and act as residential faculty intermediaries to help solve problems and advance the teaching and learning agenda. This collaboration ensures that faculty maintain an active role in college-wide decision making.

- **Instructional Councils and Curriculum Committee**

In addition to shared governance at the college level, most RSC Faculty Chairs are members of district-wide Instructional Councils as first described in Criterion 2.C.5. In this capacity, they serve as academic leaders to ensure the currency, quality, and rigor of the common district curriculum. Additionally, the residential faculty Curriculum Design Facilitator and the VPAA serve as voting members of the District Curriculum Committee, as described in Criterion 3.A.1.

- **Adjunct Faculty Employee Group Representatives**

RSC has two [Adjunct Faculty Campus Representatives](#) appointed by the MCCCCD Adjunct Faculty Association Employee Group (AFA). The RSC Campus Representatives engage actively in the

President's Cabinet to provide their perspectives and serve as a conduit to the RSC adjunct faculty.

Employee Governance

- **Employee Senate**

In July 2020, the District Office implemented an Interim Employee Senate as part of its shared governance model. Beginning July 2021, the senate transitioned to an [Employee Representation](#) structure to meet the needs of all MCCCCD employees. The RSC model was being fleshed out in fall 2021 in alignment with district structure. RSC employee representatives conduct monthly brown bag updates for college staff, and remit feedback and concerns via inclusion in the President's Cabinet and monthly meetings with the President.

Cross-college Committees

RSC has a systematic structure of committees that are interrelated and allow for participation in governance and operations across the spectrum of employees.

- The Development Team was constituted close to three decades ago as a cross-college incubation environment for developing and implementing the principles of Total Quality Management. The team includes executive leadership, mid- to senior-level administrators, and residential faculty, and plays a key role in the strategic planning process, as detailed below in Criterion 5.C.2.
- The [Innovation Think Tank](#) was formed in August 2020 as a mechanism to crowdsource the incubation of ideas and increase engagement opportunities for all RSC employees, and functions as a conduit for synthesizing, vetting, and recommending a multitude of innovative thoughts and practices.

Multiple opportunities are provided for employees to give ongoing input to the College President as detailed in Criterion 1.C.3.

In fall 2021, as a result of feedback received on the PACE Climate Survey (See Criterion 5.B.1), President Smith convened a sub-group of the President's Cabinet to review and further define the RSC shared governance model in the context of the College's mission and culture, and make recommendations for potential adjustments and revisions to the current model. The work is ongoing.

2.

RSC has invested in a sustainable infrastructure of data and information resources in the coordination of a strategic data vision. As indicated in Criterion 4.C.4, the Office of Institutional Research (IR) curates a [comprehensive set of dashboards](#) and interactive reporting through the Microsoft Power BI platform, and maintains an expansive library of [business intelligence reports](#) to drive specific workflows and processes across the college. In summer 2020, RSC partnered with [Civitas Learning](#) to seek expert insight on data infrastructure gaps, and recommendations on strengthening its data architecture. As a result of this work, the [Institutional Data Steering Team](#) (IDST) was launched to lead organizational data strategy and host college-wide data literacy training opportunities, such as the 2021 [Summer Data Camp series](#) described in Criterion 2.E.1. RSC's data and information resources ultimately inform decisions on the overall strategic direction of the college. Examples include [the research and analysis](#) conducted throughout FY2019-20 which led to the development of Strategic Plan Goal 1.

The Executive Team has a standing agenda item related to enrollment data and also receives weekly [enrollment](#) and [key metrics reports](#) providing trends and updates in enrollments and outreach campaigns as detailed in Criterion 4.C.2. Executive Team members have been trained to use PowerBI dashboards so they can access data individually at point-of-need. Additionally, IR routinely presents information to the team to assist with decision-making. Examples include [Department Reviews](#) and [Lumina/Higher Education Insights](#), and the PACE Climate Survey (See Criterion 5.B.1). The team also reviews external research, such as reports from Emsi (Criterion 2.B.2) and McKinsey (Criterion 5.C.4).

3.

Curriculum Development

The inclusive process for curriculum development at MCCCCD and RSC was described in Criterion 3.A.1. In the 2017 Adjunct Faculty Survey (the last to include this question), 76% of Adjunct Faculty (n=405) indicated positively that they have a voice in course development within their department.

Academic Requirements and Policies

[Academic requirements](#) and policy for the MCCCCD are set via the Chancellor's administrative regulations. As indicated in Criterion 2.B.1, the [College Catalog](#) is an in-depth guide to RSC's mission documents, academic information, areas of study, tuition, policies, and student services, while detailed [Student Policies pages](#) on the RSC website provide comprehensive information consistent with the administrative regulations. Faculty Chairs meet biweekly to discuss academic requirements, policies, and processes. For example, it was the Chair cohort that defined the [student inactive alert system](#) that students and faculty see in their courses. Policies and processes are also discussed at weekly cross-functional Development Team meetings.

Adjunct Faculty Involvement in Policies and Processes

RSC's adjunct faculty provide valuable feedback on policies and processes. "Faculty Focus Forums" are convened to provide input and feedback on such topics as proposed course policy changes, new professional development offerings, and findings from adjunct faculty survey data. For example, the fall 2019 Forum included an "accessibility awareness" discussion which resulted in participants requesting and all adjunct faculty subsequently receiving [training on accessibility best practices](#) during department meetings. Data from the [2019 Adjunct Faculty Survey](#) indicate that Adjunct faculty (N=417) are knowledgeable regarding the policies and procedures in their departments (90%), the College (89%), and the District (85%).

Student Involvement in Policy and Processes

- **Student Senate and Leadership**

In 2019, the District initiated the [Maricopa Student Senate](#) (MSS), comprising one student senator for each MCCCCD institution. RSC's student senator engages actively in the President's Cabinet to advocate for student needs and concerns. Student leadership and participation also emerge from co-curricular groups that include Honors and Phi Theta Kappa, as described in Criterion 3.B.4. Further, the PTK Honors-in-Action research projects described in Criterion 2.B.2 align with the work of Strategic Plan Goal 3.

- **RioLearn Portal Redesign**

In preparation for the redesign of the RioLearn Portal that launched in July 2021 (see Criterion 5.C.5), a [qualitative usability study](#) was conducted via one-on-one student interviews (N=20) to collect feedback from continuing students on the design, layout, and functionality of the new portal. The study garnered valuable feedback that was included in the design prior to launch.

- **InScribe Project**

The [InScribe project to develop digital communities](#) engaged students in decisions regarding the design and implementation of digital meeting spaces to enable onboarding, peer mentoring, and connecting with others. This initiative was implemented as [RioConnect](#) in August 2021, and aligns directly with goals 1 and 3 of the strategic plan, and with the RSC mission to "...support learners where they are."

- **Student End-of-Course Surveys**

Utilization of data from student end-of-course surveys was described in Criterion 3.C.6.

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- RSC_Presidents Cabinet_5.A.1.pdf
- RSC_Residential Faculty_5.A.1
- RSC_RioConnect_5.A.3
- RSC_RioLearn Usability Study_5.A.3
- RSC_Strategic Plan Research and Analyses_5.A.2
- RSC_Weekly Enrollment Data Report_5.A.2
- RSC_Weekly Key Metrics Reporting_5.A.2

5.B - Core Component 5.B

The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Argument

1.

Organizational Structure

RSC's [organizational structure](#) is divided into seven major units, each of which falls within the purview of a Vice President or Associate Vice President who reports to the College President. Specific operations within each unit are supported by sufficient numbers of Deans, Associate Deans, Directors, Managers, and Staff. As previously described, the RSC faculty model encompasses a small cohort of residential faculty members who serve as Faculty Chairs of their academic disciplines. For the pay period ending June 30, 2021, RSC had 537 full-time employees.

Human Resources

- **Hiring Processes**

RSC abides by the MCCCDCD [hiring process guidelines](#) which follow federal regulations and define staffing, hiring qualifications, and hiring processes for each employee group. The MCCCDCD is an EEO/AA institution and an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin. The RSC Human Resources Department conducts [full-time recruitment and hiring](#) in accordance with District procedures. Administrators, managers, and faculty serve as chairs of hiring committees and are experts in the required qualifications needed from applicants, while HR personnel provide guidance throughout the advertising, interviewing, and hiring processes. The MCCCDCD also mandates [annual training](#) for faculty serving on a hiring committee, and recommends this training for other employee groups. RSC's position openings are advertised weekly on the MCCCDCD [Human Resources website](#). Residential faculty postings may also include targeted advertisements based on discipline-specific areas. RSC's practices to attract diverse candidates were detailed in Criterion 3.C.1.

As part of the MCCCDCD, RSC HR operations are supported by district-wide systems including Human Capital Management (HCM), Student Information System (SIS), and Financial Management System (FMS), delivered through a PeopleSoft platform.

Adjunct Faculty Hiring

As indicated in Criterion 3.C.2, adjunct faculty at RSC are hired through a centralized [Faculty Services](#) Department, which pre-screens qualified candidates and verifies credentials before scheduling interviews with the appropriate department faculty chair. The RSC adjunct faculty cohort is stable, as evidenced by the fact that of the 1,263 adjunct faculty who taught during AY2019-20, 707 had been with RSC for 5 years or more, and 375 had over 10 years of service at the College. The adjunct faculty retention rate for the same timeframe was an overwhelmingly positive 96%.

Employee Orientation, Training, and Recognition

RSC devotes considerable resources to nurturing a workforce that has a deep understanding of college culture. The [Employee Engagement & Resource Center](#) is a comprehensive RSC office which conducts new employee onboarding and ongoing training, provides resources for employees and supervisors, and runs programs such as Wellness and Awards and Recognition. The [Employee Engagement](#) website provides a wealth of RSC historical and cultural information, and the [Employee Resources](#) website provides information on professional growth, funding sources, and employee career enhancement opportunities. RSC was recognized as a [2021 Great College to Work For](#) based on an employee survey administered by Modern Think LLC.

- **The *Rio Wave* Orientation**

RSC's long-time employee orientation, the *Rio Way*, was phased out in 2017. After an extensive redevelopment process that included research into best practices, lessons learned, and focus groups with key RSC leaders and stakeholders, a revised employee orientation was launched in January 2020. Since the MCCCDC no longer holds a traditional initial orientation for new employees, district-wide elements were incorporated as well. In order to make the new 3-day *Rio Wave* experience as relevant and inclusive as possible, facilitators include RSC employees from across departments and employee groups, and all materials meet required accessibility standards. In the first 18 months, 93 full- and part-time new employees completed Day 1 training, with full-time employees also completing Days 2 and 3. All participants who responded to post-Day1 surveys indicated that they were satisfied with the training. The *Rio Wave* is the first component of a planned first year employee experience which is being further developed in fall 2021.

- **Awards and Recognition**

RSC implemented a new proprietary [Awards and Recognition](#) system in 2020, designed to allow employees to recognize their peers and thereby reinforcing the college culture of teamwork and cross-departmental collaboration. The system engages employees through two distinct paths; peer-to-peer recognition where employees can award redeemable points to co-workers, and nomination for a formal presidential award for outstanding service that actualizes RSC's values. Award recipients are nominated by co-workers, managers, and administrators. In the first 18 months of the peer-to-peer program, [197 employees have awarded recognition points to 429 recipients](#).

- **Wellness**

RSC prioritizes wellness as an integral component of organizational culture, and the [8 dimensions of wellness](#) are reinforced through the availability of a fitness center offering personal training and yoga classes, onsite quiet rooms to provide employees a place to decompress, and annual MCCCDC health screenings for eligible employees, as well as programming that places emphasis on the 4 Practices of

Engagement, described in detail in Criterion 1.C.3. [Wellness Wednesday](#) newsletters reinforce and provide further information and content around these concepts, including an [Employee Resource Guide](#) which provides comprehensive information around all aspects of physical and mental well-being.

RSC was awarded a [2020 Copper award of excellence in worksite wellness](#) and a [2021 Gold award of excellence](#) by the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program (HAWP), which recognizes employers who support employee health and wellness. Additionally, in 2021 the College earned the [Phoenix Business Journal's Healthiest Employer Award](#).

Monthly Supervisors' Meetings

The monthly [supervisor's meetings](#) provide an opportunity for ongoing dialogue with colleagues, sharing best practices, and receiving information about RSC initiatives that need to be communicated to their departments and supervisees. Approximately 75 supervisors regularly attend these sessions.

Student Affairs Quality Assurance Training

Quality Assurance training for Student Affairs personnel was detailed in Criterion 3.C.7.

MCCCD Professional Growth Funds

The MCCCD provides professional growth funds to employees for tuition costs towards additional coursework and to attend professional conferences. During the past three fiscal years, the District spent \$260,335 on tuition costs and \$195,095 for conference registration fees and travel costs for RSC Classified Staff employees.

MCCCD Professional Development Opportunities

The MCCCD [Professional Development program](#) provides ongoing training opportunities and resources, including [online training modules](#) on multiple topics such as personal and professional development, supervisory/leadership skills, technology skills, health and safety requirements, etc. In addition, as mentioned in Criterion 1.C.3, the MCCCD provides [career development](#) and [mentoring](#) opportunities.

PACE (Personal Assessment of the College Environment) Climate Survey for Community Colleges

In fall 2020, RSC administered the [PACE Climate Survey for Community Colleges](#). Overall, higher than aggregated peer averages in every category indicated a healthy culture at RSC. In accordance with the "Next Steps" recommendations, a sub-team of the President's Cabinet was formed in spring 2021 to develop and implement an action plan. Approximately 20 focus groups were held in summer 2021, which allowed for sharing of results and exploration of action items with various departments and employee groups.

Physical Infrastructure--Locations

As described in Criterion 1.B.3, the College operates a number of [locations](#) throughout the greater Phoenix metropolitan area. The Dean of Instruction and Community Development has oversight of the college-owned locations, and each operates under a Director of Instructional Services, responsible for supervising and evaluating staff and serving as a liaison with the local communities and with

partner stakeholders. Classrooms at the locations feature state-of-the-art technologies that support an optimal student learning environment. Comprehensive student services are also provided. Details of the types of programs and services offered at the locations have been included throughout this report in the appropriate contexts.

Technological Infrastructure

RSC's technological infrastructure was described in Criterion 3.D.4. Technology budgeting follows the general budget processes described below in Criterion 5.B.3. The FY2021-22 technology operational budget is \$1.26 million.

2.

RSC's culture is focused on its educational purposes: college bridge pathways; community-based learning; corporate and government partnerships; early college initiatives; online learning; and university transfer. The [three goals](#) of the Rio Salado College Strategic Plan align directly with the [mission](#), as demonstrated in Criterion 1.A.1. These goals were derived following extensive data analysis of RSC's current state and exploration of opportunities for continuous improvement. Additionally, they are in keeping with available resources. The goals anticipate future opportunities envisioned out to 2024. Details on the specifics of the strategic plan will follow below in Core Component 5.C.3.

3.

Rio Salado College Budget Planning Process

RSC has adequate financial and infrastructure resources to support delivery of programs and services in person, online, at the RSC locations, and at partner locations across Maricopa County and nationally. The total base operating budget (Fund 1), as for all MCCCDC colleges, is calculated by the District Budget Office and approved annually by the Governing Board. RSC has complete authority to allocate the base budget to meet its goals and objectives for the upcoming fiscal year. The District's funding model is designed to support existing operations, with adjustments to the annual allocation based on changes in enrollment that are calculated according to Full-time Student Equivalent (FTSE). This funding source is currently \$71 per credit hour, equating to \$2,130 per FTSE. The MCCCDC [budget development process flowchart](#) illustrates its inclusive nature.

RSC operates on a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year. Budget planning starts in October after audited enrollment data for the prior fiscal year is released by the District, and continues through March when the college budget is submitted to the MCCCDC Budget Office. The District's adopted budget is not finalized and published until the first week of June. The College uses an incremental development process for base operating budgets in which the current year's operating budget is the starting point for next fiscal year requests, and adjustments are made based on available budget allocations in alignment with priorities and strategic planning goals. An annual resource-planning process focuses on Unrestricted Funds, which include Fund 1, Fund 2 (Auxiliary Funds), and Fund 7 ([Capital Funds](#)) resources.

The RSC [Executive Team](#) holds a collaborative annual budget planning retreat during which funding priorities are identified based on strategic goals, needs across the college, and available resources. Division vice presidents work with faculty, deans, and directors under their purview to assess anticipated needs and manage existing budget allocations for the next fiscal year. Additional resource

requests are then evaluated against established strategic priorities and within resource availability based on enrollment trends and data, and the Executive Team comes to agreement on major revisions. RSC is in transition to integrate multi-year, all-funds resource planning that will better support the alignment of resources with strategic focus on long-term goals.

After changes have been vetted and supported by the Executive Team, budgets are finalized by the Vice President of Administrative Services and the College President, and final adjustments are entered into the District's Maricopa Planning and Budget (MPB) system for delivery of a balanced budget. Final, governing-board-approved totals are shared with the College President and Vice Presidents/Divisional Managers through [budget reports](#).

Fund 2 is the operating fund where self-supporting auxiliary enterprise operations are recorded. Out-of-state tuition is the largest revenue source in this fund, and all such revenues received are controlled and managed by the College. Historically, revenues in Fund 2 have exceeded expenditures, and this positioned RSC to augment other college operations. However, in recent years expenditures across Fund 2 have outpaced revenues (related to enrollment decreases in online learning since 2018), putting pressure on fund balances. Since RSC relies on Fund 2 to help support operations including salaries, benefits, supplies, improvements, and equipment, this is an area of concern.

For future financial stability and growth, RSC continues to invest and explore areas for expanded market diversification, including out-of-state online students and business-to-business partnerships through the [Rio National](#) enterprise. Tuition for students residing outside the State of Arizona is set at \$241 per credit hour, equating to \$7,230 per FTSE, more than three times the revenue for in-state enrollments. These investments are gaining traction, with new partnerships materializing that are anticipated to result in added net revenue and resources to cover RSC operations without straining its Fund 2 resources.

4.

RSC has sufficient resource base to support educational program offerings, and actively plans for maintaining and strengthening the quality of its educational programs through a robust process aligned with the [2020-24 strategic planning goals and investment priorities](#).

Fiscal Resources

As previously indicated, fiscal resources are allocated annually to RSC from the MCCCCD. Revenue across MCCCCD is generated from property taxes, tuition and fees, grants, donations, and auxiliary enterprises. College operating budgets are based primarily on tuition and fees tied to enrollment, and on property taxes where a portion is identified to support MCCCCD operations.

The MCCCCD has sound fiscal systems and proper controls along with strong planning and budgeting policies that support the entire District and its colleges. This is evidenced by consistently receiving AAA ratings from major bond rating agencies. As noted in the [CAFR 2020](#): “Reasons cited for the high ratings included deep and diverse economic base; good financial policies and management practices; maintenance of very strong financial and unrestricted net assets positions despite declining full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enrollment.” (see p.24).

Centralized support and technical assistance are provided to all MCCCCD colleges by the District Business Services division to augment college operations. Services include accounting, auditing (external and internal), purchasing, surplus and auxiliary services, accounts payable, payroll, grants

administration, and budgeting.

MCCCD FY2021-22 Budget

The District uses the fund accounting financial structure to manage its resources, guided by accounting principles as defined by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).

The [FY2021-22 budget](#) compares the estimated revenue and expenditures from FY2020-21 with the adopted FY2021-22 budget, providing a base for future budgeted expenditure and revenue comparisons. Throughout the budget process, the District evaluates the ability to sustain approved initiatives in the future.

Rio Salado College FY2021-22 Budget

RSC's budget allocation from the District for FY2021-22 was approximately \$61.4M. Budget allocations have historically been relatively stable year-over-year, with recent-year declines tied to declining enrollments. The FY2021-22 budget also includes the first of a multi-year annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 4% for all employees that was approved by the Governing Board in spring 2021.

Sources

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- [MCCCD_Budget Flow Diagram and Task Force Membership_5.B.3](#)
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- [MCCCD_Hiring Guide for a Competitive Hiring Process_5.B.1](#)
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- RSC_Strategic Plan_Three Goals_5.B.2
- RSC_Supervisors Meeting 2021 Agendas_5.B.1
- RSC_Wellness Wednesday_5.B.1

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.
5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Argument

1.

Resource Allocation

The external institutional environment of the MCCCDC has a considerable impact on college planning, especially in terms of resource allocation, direction of strategic focus, and new programmatic directions. RSC has added specific allocations for initiatives aligned with its strategic plan, detailed below in Criterion 5.C.3. Further, to support its nontraditional model, RSC sustains sufficient resources and infrastructure to support all operations at its multiple locations (see Criterion 5.B.1.)

To ensure fiscal accountability, MCCCDC college presidents submit [annual reports outlining college achievements](#) to the Executive Vice Chancellor, in alignment with the [District Strategic Priorities](#). The District rolls these data up into a comprehensive annual [Performance Monitoring Report](#) which is posted to their website for transparent disclosure to all stakeholders. The Governing Board also maintains a [monitoring dashboard](#) for continuous tracking. RSC's budget prioritization and planning processes, which align with its mission areas and the District's outcomes, were detailed in Criterion 5.B above.

2.

Planning and Budgeting

In working to ensure the overall quality of its programs, services, and offerings, RSC engages in regular, systematic reviews of departments, functional units, and academic programs. Academic programs and departments also engage in regular cycles of evaluation via the annual budget review process (detailed in Criterion 5.A.3), and the academic program review cycle (Criterion 4.A.1). Non-instructional department review (see Criterion 5.C.6) provides teams with the opportunity to establish

strategic operational goals and assess the need for resources and budgetary requests based on future priorities. Departments are able to outline budget proposals within the report, which are then [reviewed with executive team leadership](#) during budget planning cycles. Results from these processes are documented and shared with academic leadership to help inform budget allocation. As an example, the DRS department review surfaced a need for appropriate office space, which is being scoped in fall 2021.

Since planning processes such as budgeting are driven by the District Office, strong coordination and collaboration is required between the College and the District. This coordination has been challenged owing to turnover in senior-level roles at both RSC and the District Office over the past five years. Therefore, the RSC Executive Team is inventorying [existing planning processes, timelines, and cycles](#) in an effort to increase integration and proactive planning. RSC is also collaborating with the District Associate Vice Chancellor of Strategy, Research and Effectiveness to acquire a software solution that can assist the College in better documenting the linkage between planning and budgeting.

Total Quality Management and Continuous Quality Improvement

Grounded in its 30-year commitment to Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), RSC continues to improve the institution through a framework of [Plan-Do-Check-Act](#) (PDCA), a CQI tool that has long been adapted and implemented for use in college-wide planning. Examples of PDCA cycles used in course-level assessment of student learning were referenced in Criterion 4.B.1. RSC was a founding member and stays actively involved in the Alliance for Innovation and Transformation (AFIT), formerly known as Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN). Each year, the college [sends a team to AFIT](#) to advance systematic, strategic models for continuous improvement.

Systematic Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness

At the completion of the 2016-19 strategic planning cycle, RSC had allocated significant budget to substantially improve its infrastructure and tools to guide data-informed decisions for integrated strategic and operational improvements, including the implementation of Power BI dashboards (see 4.C.2), the formation of the Institutional Data Steering Team (see 4.C.2 and 5.A.2), and the convening of a Strategic Enrollment Management Committee that led to the development of the SEM plan described in Criterion 4.C.1.

3.

Strategic Planning--MCCCD

Contextualized by the [Governing Board Vision, Mission, and Values](#), MCCCD's strategic plan sets the future direction of the District; addresses large-scale issues affecting the community and colleges; seeks input from internal and external stakeholders and environments; and provides direction for operational activities throughout the system.

Strategic Planning—Rio Salado College

After celebrating its 40th anniversary in December 2018 and submitting the [HLC Quality Initiative](#) in June 2019, RSC embarked on defining its next era through a process grounded in the PDCA framework. The Quality Initiative had described the process whereby RSC combined strategic

planning into an integrated, aligned infrastructure across all areas of its mission. In fall 2019, nine cross-functional teams formally closed out their work on the [pathways of the 2016-19 strategic plan](#), clearly documenting what was accomplished as well as work to be continued.

- **2020 Strategic Planning Process**

In fall 2019, a cross-functional strategic planning team was formed as a subset of the long-standing Development Team. Additionally, a competitive market analysis was conducted by CampusWorks Consulting, which benchmarked RSC against 14 higher education institutions growing online enrollment for two-year degrees across the country. This benchmarking produced a [situational analysis](#) based on external conditions, and Institutional Research solicited feedback from stakeholders by [surveying students](#), [alumni](#), [employees](#), and members of the [President's Advisory Council](#) to gauge areas of strength and opportunities for change. During 2020, RSC hosted a virtual [Speaker Series](#) to provide innovative perspectives on the future of work, automation of the workforce, critical skills, and serving the needs of future students. Prior to each session, the RSC community was surveyed for insights and ideas that were captured to guide the strategic discussions, in addition to the subsequent formation of an Innovation Think Tank (Criterion 5.A.1).

As work proceeded on the 2020 plan, RSC recognized the opportunity to better integrate its planning processes, in alignment with the Society for College and University Planning ([SCUP Integrated Planning Maturity Model](#)). The College created an interim Chief Strategy Officer role to lead this work, subsequently launching a national search for a [Vice President of Strategy and Advancement](#) in fall 2021.

- **Revising the Mission Documents**

As a component of this strategic planning and alignment process, the Development Team critically reviewed the existing RSC mission and vision and recommended revisions to the Executive Team. After college-wide review and input, the revised mission documents were approved by the Governing Board in September 2020, as described in Criterion 1.A.1.

- **Publishing the 2020-24 Strategic Plan**

Final draft strategic plan goals were discussed and vetted through the Development Team and at a subsequent college-wide meeting in August 2020, and the new [Rio Salado College Strategic Plan](#) was published in fall 2020. A four-year cycle was selected to implement, monitor, and evaluate the goals due to RSC's dynamic nature and the rapidly-shifting national higher education landscape.

- **Operationalizing the Strategic Plan**

President Smith charged each department to select one college-wide goal and utilize the Franklin Covey 4 Disciplines of Execution® (4DX) framework to cascade the goal to the departmental level for action planning. A comprehensive training program and infrastructure was developed for the [RSC implementation of 4DX](#), whereby each department had a designated Team Lead and a dedicated Coach. Teams planned their goals and strategies in division retreats, department meetings, and facilitated sessions throughout fall 2020. Close to 40 college-wide trainings were offered along with weekly open forums. Concurrently, the annual budget cycle was underway (see Criterion 5.B.3), and department-level [Wildly Important Goals](#) (WIGs) were presented to division vice presidents and the Executive Team to ensure alignment of financial resources and strategic investments with identified college-wide priorities. As of July 2021, 40 active departmental teams had submitted WIGs, lead

measures, and scoreboards.

- **Monitoring the 2020 Strategic Plan**

Departments monitor goal progress through [dedicated 4DX score boards](#) on a regular basis, with additional monitoring by the Executive Team and Development Team, where 4DX teams present and share their work. The Quality Assurance Manager tracks institutional-level progress on goals and successes, reporting macro-level milestones and opportunities to the Executive Team and President's Cabinet. An internal college strategic plan site is open to all RSC employees, allowing for access to historical data, current information, and progress-monitoring.

RSC completed its [first annual progress report](#) for the 2020 strategic plan in September 2021. Also in September 2021, the District Office began circulation of its 2021-2024 [strategic priorities and metrics draft](#). Thus, RSC strategic planning clearly aligns with district planning.

4.

Financial Planning—District Level

The District has developed a [15-year financial plan](#) that looks back five years, includes the current year, and then looks forward nine years. This plan incorporates all District Governing Board financial policies and objectives.

Financial Planning—College Level

RSC's base operating budget is adjusted annually through Enrollment Growth Funding (EGF); increases or decreases in FTSE for the current fiscal year as compared to the prior year. FTSE projections are prepared for the District Budget Office each fall and updated in the spring for the next two fiscal years. These projections are used to determine potential EGF allocations that RSC may receive from- or return to the District. An advantage of the RSC adjunct faculty model is that it allows for much greater budgetary flexibility in line with fluctuations in student enrollment.

Process for Monitoring Expenses

RSC Business Services has developed an [enhanced set of budget reports](#) derived from enterprise systems data that support robust financial management and budget planning college-wide. In addition to FMS (Financial Management System) reports, Business Services provides monthly reports to each executive team member, itemized by organization-, fund-, and expense type category. Further, RSC Business Services provides a monthly budget to actual report to executive team members and all managers with FMS access. This budget slicer file allows for filtering of expenses by Vice President; Budget Manager; Fund; Department; Account; College Location; and FMS Account Summary Inquiry. Managers have received training and may review expenses on a daily basis if they so choose.

5.

Technology Planning

As a nontraditional college currently supporting close to 30,000 online learners, RSC has always been cognizant of the importance of remaining abreast of emerging technologies. The prime example of this is the custom-built RioLearn LMS, which was developed close to two decades ago in order to

identify an innovative technology solution that would support RSC's centralized online course model and multiple start dates (as described in Criterion 3.D.4). The system has been updated several times to improve functionality, ease of use, and effectiveness. A RioLearn mobile application launched in fall 2019 (and is being improved in 2021), and a new [RioLearn portal](#) with enhanced features was launched in July 2021, allowing for a fully-accessible one-stop student experience. The Portal integrates with [Drift](#), providing chatbots with college-specific information, live chat, and appointment scheduling. Additional recently-implemented improvements were an expansion of the single sign-on services between RioLearn and third-party educational applications, enhanced message center usability, and increased automated grade communication to the MCCC'D's student information system. Near-term planned and current projects include updating the RioLearn infrastructure using the most recent versions of SharePoint, SQL, and MVC codebase.

The MCCC'D [Information Technology Services Plan](#) outlines district priorities in the areas of promoting student success/enhancing the student experience, and improving organizational and operational effectiveness, in alignment with the MCCC'D strategic priorities and goals.

Environmental Scanning and Planning

Over the years, in order to develop resources and extend educational opportunities to those who need them the most, RSC has forged collaborative partnerships with multiple community stakeholders. The initial approach involves a process of dialogue with constituents to understand the scope of their needs, followed by research to learn more about potential student demographics and employment opportunities in the area. As examples, RSC has used local and national researchers, Department of Labor statistics, and information provided by the MCCC'D Workforce Development Department to glean specific information. Other avenues of cooperation include working with local city government officials (e.g., council members, economic developers, K-12 education administrators, hospitals, and private industry) to further determine appropriate potential programs and services. For instance, the Adult ACE programs detailed in Criterion 1.C.2 offer classes at multiple RSC locations based on the Arizona Department of Education's requests for service, and where need is determined to exist. The Dean of Instruction and Partnerships and the Curriculum Department coordinate RSC's [new program research, vetting, and approval process](#), working closely with key RSC and community stakeholders. As part of this process, the College conducts environmental scans to determine program need, which include such viability meters as gathering data on similar programs in the target area; collecting market-need indicators such as employment data and salary projections; conducting occupational advisory committees; and gauging industry support for the new program. A recent example, which aligns directly with Strategic Plan Goal 2, was the [Micro-Credentials survey](#) conducted in summer 2021 in collaboration with the Tempe Chamber of Commerce. The College also conducts ongoing external research on national trends, such as in-demand skills and fastest-growing jobs, and has recently partnered with the [McKinsey Group through the Taskforce on Higher Education and Opportunity](#), Hanover Research, and CampusWorks to guide ongoing institutional scanning and analysis. As mentioned above, CampusWorks completed a competitive market analysis which was used to inform the 2020 strategic planning process.

Institutional Research and Institutional Effectiveness

As indicated throughout this document, [Institutional Research](#) (IR) is responsible for initiating and implementing comprehensive institutional effectiveness efforts across the College. Under the leadership of an Associate Dean, the IR Department is highly integrated in planning, measurement, analysis, and data mining, as exemplified by the Power BI applications and Institutional Data Research Team previously referenced. IR coordinates the reporting and distribution of college-wide

assessments; provides student evaluations and reports; designs, and administers surveys; publishes the [College Fact Sheet](#) and other reports as needed; assists with research projects; supports grant data collection and analysis; and responds to ad-hoc requests. Further, as detailed in Criterion 4.B.2, IR is integrally involved in student learning outcomes assessment. Institutional Research also oversees the College's participation in the Voluntary Framework of Accountability (see Criterion 4.C.4), and includes VFA results in the data published on the public-facing website. Also, IR works closely with Institutional Integrity staff to ensure that RSC remains compliant with all local, state and federal reporting regulations, as well as HLC reporting guidelines.

6.

The systematic implementation and tracking of strategic planning goals through departmental WIGs was described in detail above. In addition to the academic program review process designed to improve student outcomes described in Criterion 4.A.1, RSC implements institutional and operational improvement through a process of non-instructional department review.

Department Review

In summer 2018, RSC hired a Quality Assurance Manager with the primary goal of establishing an ongoing review of non-instructional departments. Department Review was the natural progression from a previous process that measured individual performance at the department level via service standards, but failed to serve as a foundation for integrated departmental strategic planning and institution-wide service improvements. The Department Review design and implementation was an iterative PDCA process that began with a template closely aligned with the Baldrige Quality Criteria for Education. Version 1 was piloted in spring 2019, and reviews were evaluated by a cross-functional internal team through detailed rubrics aligned with the review template. Feedback was gathered from participating departments and evaluators, which led to refinement and streamlining with a second pilot in fall 2019. Further adjustment resulted in the current versions of the [Department Review Template](#) and [Evaluation Rubric](#). Participants are provided with a detailed [Departmental Review Guidance document](#), and reviews are planned and tracked according to a detailed [schedule](#). One of the required outcomes is to envision possible future projects for PDCA cycles, providing ideas for potential 4DX execution. An example of this is the [Dual Enrollment Department](#), which has implemented improvements based on their spring 2020 department review. The review process is designed as a three-to-five year cycle, with annual updates between the larger reviews as part of departmental self-reflection and continuous quality improvement. As indicated in Criterion 5.C.2, data from department reviews are shared with the Executive Team and acted upon as needed.

Sources

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- HLC_Quality Initiative_5.C.3
- MCCCCD_15 Yr Financial Plan_5.C.4
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- RSC_Department Review Template_5.C.6
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- RSC_Enhanced Budget Reports_5.C.4
- RSC_Exec Team Department Review_STRAD Update_5.C.2
- RSC_Fact Sheet_5.C.5
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- RSC_Inventory of Planning_5.C.2
- RSC_PDCA Cycle_5.C.2
- RSC_Program Development Flowchart_5.C.5
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- RSC_Speaker Series Future of Work_5.C.3
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- RSC_Year End Strategic Accomplishments Report_5.C.1
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5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Summary

- A sub-group of the President's Cabinet is reviewing the RSC shared governance model and making recommendations in the context of the College's refreshed mission and culture.
- RSC has an extensive orientation, training, and support structures for all employees.
- Results of the PACE Climate Survey for Community Colleges indicate an extremely healthy institutional culture.
- RSC was recognized as a 2021 *Great College to Work For* based on an employee survey administered by ModernThink LLC.
- The RSC Executive Team has created an inventory of existing planning processes, timelines, and cycles to increase integration and proactive planning within the confines of the District budget planning process.
- The 2020-24 Strategic Plan was developed through an extremely robust and inclusive process with active participation of cross-college stakeholders, including the establishment of an employee Innovation Think Tank.
- Strategic Plan goals are cascaded to the departmental level via the Franklin-Covey 4DX framework.
- RSC has strengthened its data infrastructure with the establishment of the Institutional Data Steering Team (IDST) that supports Strategic- and SEM planning, monitoring, and decision-making.
- RSC has implemented a non-academic department review process, creating a foundation for integrated departmental strategic planning and institution-wide service improvements.

Sources

There are no sources.